

# PlayStation®

## Official Magazine - UK

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# Modern Warfare 2

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Prototype  
Overlord II  
Red Faction: Guerrilla  
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**PLAYSTATION 3**



# MISTAKES. IT'S THE REASON SOME SUPERHEROES WEAR A MASK.

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# PlayStation®

## Official Magazine - UK

### Welcome



Full disclosure here: Modern Warfare is my favourite game on PS3 by some

distance. It was love at first squeeze of a silenced MP5 (let's hope those words are never used against me by Crimewatch) and I've been super-pumped for the sequel ever since. Having spent quality time with the game and its creators, we came away knowing this: it's going to be huge. Like, leave the kids, sell the house, play it forever *huge*.

Or at least that'd be the plan if there wasn't so much other stupidly big stuff on the horizon. Like the astonishing new game from Team Ico (we're tentatively calling the creature catratbird), the surprisingly brilliant DJ Hero (which they absolutely *need* Terminator X to front), and this year's potentially titanic battle between PES 2010 and FIFA 10.

There's also plenty to play right now, because it's another crazy strong month for reviews, with Red Faction: Guerrilla, Prototype and the PS3-exclusive Ghostbusters all confirming that this is turning into a gala year for third-person action games. Speaking of which, there's the small matter of Hideo Kojima's next game to consider. Much more on which, next month...

**Tim Clark**  
Editor-in-chief

[tim.clark@futurenet.com](mailto:tim.clark@futurenet.com)

### EXCLUSIVE REVIEW



**54**  
**MODERN WARFARE 2**

The sequel to PS3's best shooter is here. Feel free to fire your AK in the air now.

**Save 15%**  
Off every issue  
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the best football game on PlayStation

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## Who we are...



**Tim Clark**  
Editor-in-chief

Close to total meltdown after losing four hours of design in LittleBigPlanet. Game now rescored 8/10.

**Game of the month**  
Trash Panic  
**Favourite special force**  
Spetsnaz



**Ben Wilson**  
Deputy editor

Hard man of five-a-side reduced to helpless kitten as opposition fielded a lady. "She kept tackling me," he sobbed.

**Game of the month**  
Trash Panic  
**Favourite special force**  
M.A.S.K.



**Leon Hurley**  
Commissioning editor

Still employed, despite deciding to tell Tim: "It's you, not the game."

**Game of the month**  
Fallout 3  
**Favourite special force**  
Forças Especiais



**Rachel Penny**  
News editor

Finally got through series one of The Wire. Begged us not to mention her secret crush on Bubbles.

**Game of the month**  
Fat Princess  
**Favourite special force**  
Lwów Eagles



**Nathan Ditum**  
Reviews editor

Overuse of 'balls' caused it to make the banned words board. Now worryingly obsessed with 'wang'.

**Game of the month**  
Magic Ball  
**Favourite special force**  
Aqua Teen Hunger Force



**Helen Woodey**  
Operations editor

Says she's only playing Guitar Hero Metallica from now on. Unless Neversoft finally makes Guitar Hero Saxon.

**Game of the month**  
Guitar Hero Metallica  
**Favourite special force**  
RNLI



**David Boddington**  
Content producer

Gentle Bod has the worst red card record in lunch PES and is the cause of JJ's Ronaldo-style strops.

**Game of the month**  
COD: World At War  
**Favourite special force**  
Ross Kemp



**James Jarvis**  
Assistant producer

Only interested in the Xi puzzle and girls. Shame they're mutually exclusive.

**Game of the month**  
SingStar Pop Edition  
**Favourite special force**  
Delta Force

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# On your disc



Bok! That is the sound of this month's knockout demo disc smashing all other discs in their shiny faces. This month I've braved the octagon to bring you UFC 2009 Undisputed, mixed martial arts

at its brutal, slightly huggy, best. The all-action X-Men Origins: Wolverine is just as hardcore, and gives you a chance to find out exactly how much damage adamantium claws can do to a man's intestines. (Spoiler: quite a lot.) And if those contenders aren't heavyweight enough for you, I've personally selected another eleven super-strong demos for you to try. Don't forget your gumshield.

Rachel Penny **News** editor



## This month's exclusive highlights...



### X-Men Origins: Wolverine

Don the adamantium blades (and fulsome lamb chops) of everyone's favourite self-mending mutant.



### Wanted: Weapons Of Fate

Spit in the face of physics as you learn to curve bullets in this film-based action shooter.



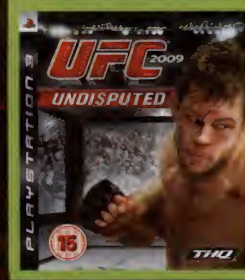
### Wheelman

So it turns out Barcelona is a hotbed of organised crime and only Vin Diesel running a bunch of cars off the road can clean the city up. Fine, we're sold.



### Red Faction: Guerrilla

Welcome to Mars and your life as a one-man wrecking crew. Blow up just about everything as the sci-fi shooter finally delivers real destructibility.



### What if my disc doesn't work?

If it definitely doesn't work, send the disc to Disc Returns, OPM, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW and we'll replace it. You can also email questions to [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com).

Also on the disc this month **Playable** Tom Clancy's HAWX, Killzone 2, Skate 2, Motorstorm: Pacific Rift, NHL 09, NBA Live 09, WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009, Sonic Unleashed  
**Video** Battlefield 1943, Split Second



**ONE SHALL STAND.  
ONE SHALL FALL.**



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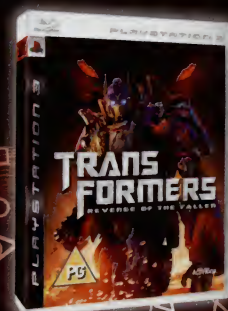
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**PLAYSTATION 3**



# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about...

**"We were wrong!"**

Why DJ Hero will be good.

► **Page 14**



**Mirror image**

Faith cosplay blows us away.

► **Page 15**



**Board, stupid**

The future of Tony Hawk's.

► **Page 16**



**PES saved by Baseball game?**

Messi gets a makeover.

► **Page 18**



**Jen's return**

Leaked 'net video shows BG&E sequel.

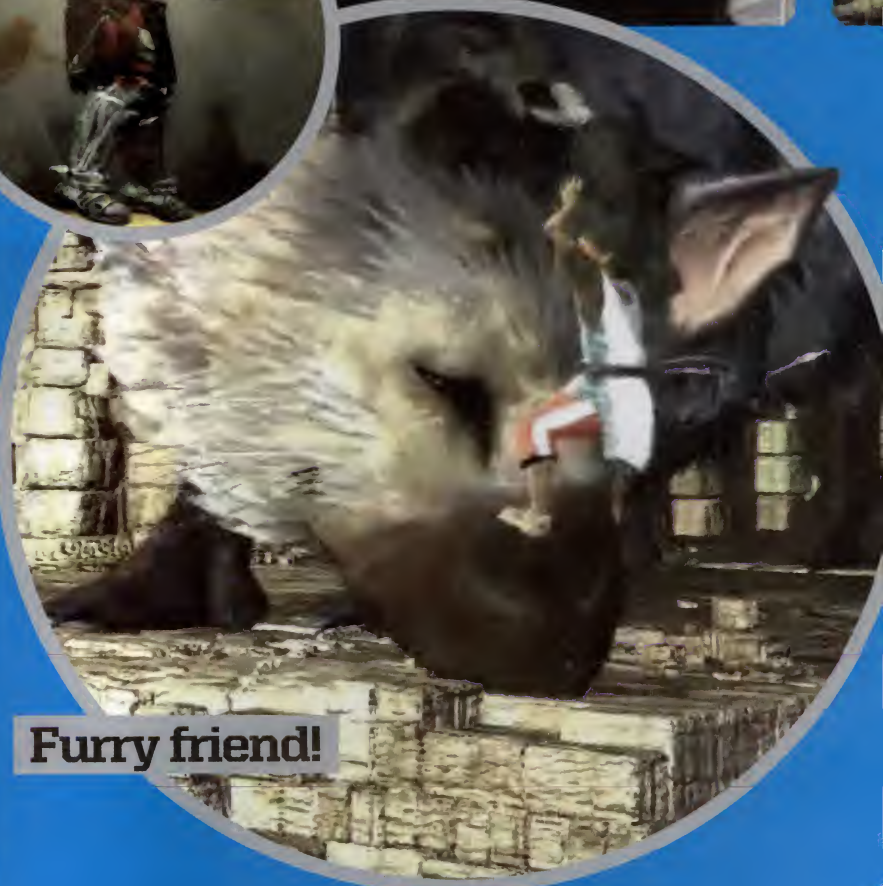
► **Page 20**



■ This young whippersnapper seems to have some control over the cat-rat-bird, and is no doubt our hero.



**Soldier!**



**Furry friend!**



Tail!



1

# Project Trico

Team Ico's new game leaks online. Maybe

## E3 2009

If you've been following our OPM Twitter ([twitter.com/OPM\\_UK](https://twitter.com/OPM_UK)) feed you'll already have been getting our daily E3 updates straight to your phone and desktop. If not, you'll have missed out, because at time of going to print (pre E3), it looks like an amazing show. Highlights should include the much-rumoured PSP redesign, and the meaning behind Hideo Kojima's cloudy teaser site. (New Metal Gear Solid games for PS3 and PSP, we say.) So for the full, behind-the-scenes story, pick up next month's issue, on sale 7 July.

Looking like a teleporter accident involving a cat, a bird and an oddly adorable rat, this amazing creature may well be the future of PS3.

Leaked footage, widely thought to be a year old, for Team Ico's secret project appeared online in the run-up to this month's E3 show in LA, where the game was tipped to be revealed. The video shows a young boy and a giant monster clambering around a massive stone building. The story remains a mystery, but everything else about the footage, from the dreamlike world to the almost feline movements of the monster suggest a console-defining game.

At the time Sony declined to comment on the footage, but there's no denying how similar it looks to the screenshot that appeared on a job advert for Team Ico in January last year. And as with the developer's previous games, Ico and Shadow Of The Colossus, the obvious suggestion is of two characters collaborating.

Much has been made of the evocative music used in the footage, which is taken from the Coen brothers' 1990 gangster film *Miller's Crossing*. Sadly, it's likely to only be placeholder. In the video we see the boy feeding the creature and in return getting to use it like a giant

feathery stepladder. The monster stands on its hind legs to push the small boy onto a high ledge, and there's even a brief underwater sequence, with the creature diving as the boy holds tightly to its feathers.

## Show business

All being well, by the time you read this the game will have wowed show-goers at E3, no doubt looking slightly different to this version. Hopefully not too different, though. With its astonishingly lifelike animation, we're already in love.

See it for yourself at [snipurl.com/je0i](http://snipurl.com/je0i) then let us know what you think at [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com).



# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

## 2 Hanging out with our new best mates

Infinity Ward chats to us about MW2, Iraq and realism

Everyone at OPM loves the original Modern Warfare like a particularly nails older brother. (Think Paddy Considine in Dead Man's Shoes.) So when we were invited to see the sequel, and chat with the development team, there was plenty to talk about.

Like the new COD game engine. While some forum posters have been moaning about MW2's snow – it's not 'snowy' enough, apparently – there's actually been a substantial overhaul to the tech, says Infinity Ward's community manager Robert Bowling. "We gave a lot of tools to the environment artists so every firefight's an experience. There's a lot of physics-enabled stuff. Even grenades are now physics objects, so if I was to throw a grenade and it lands at the top of the stairs, it'll roll down them, bounce, gain momentum and roll back down towards me."

Studio head Vince Zampella is adamant, though, that the changes they've made and new things they've added are best for the experience, not just gimmicks. "Our decisions on what features we support aren't based on it being a buzz word. It's

'How does that affect the game?' So does this 'what's best for the game' attitude mean no more respawning enemies – one of MW's few flaws? "There were a couple of spots in the last game – they weren't infinite but I think they were a little too much for some people," responds Zampella. "It's a delicate balance. You don't want an area where there's an obvious enemy generator, where you can sit there and pop them off until you move

Middle East'. Zampella concedes, "It was all real locations except for the 'Middle Eastern' stuff." He explains why: "There are sensitivities. You don't want something that will detract from the story. If we'd said 'this is Iraq' it would have been a distraction. It didn't fit for us to do it, and I think calling it a specific place while there was a conflict going on would have been a distraction." Was he worried about causing offence? "Not that

### "If we'd said 'This is Iraq' it would have been a distraction."

forwards. But you also don't want giant lulls in the gameplay." How do they hope to avoid the problem? "We do a lot of focus testing – we'll see where people get stuck and adjust it. For balancing, the things that we'd change are the number of enemies, their difficulty – there are a ton of settings: accuracy, reaction times..."

people would take it badly, just that it would draw comparisons to something we didn't want – to be compared to the Iraq war."

Did refusing to name it really make any difference? "In your mind you'd have some expectation on what it should be. With a fictional place it's a clean slate, it doesn't matter what it's called." Now, however, Modern Warfare 2 is all real. Why the change of heart? "It fits the story the way we're doing it now," replies Zampella. Discover what else you can expect in our huge MW2 feature, starting p54.

Follow community manager Robert Bowling on Twitter ('fourzerotwo') for the latest Modern Warfare 2 gossip.



### Dev talk

"The reaction to COD4 was phenomenal. It blew us away. It's one of the top-selling games of all time and that's crazy. We're floored by the success." Vince Zampella  
Studio head, Infinity Ward

### Naming names

One of the more interesting points that came up was the Genericastan levels in Call Of Duty 4. Despite obviously being Iraq, Modern Warfare avoided saying so and instead wussed out with a mumbly 'somewhere in the



### Where's the warzone?

Confirmed locations so far include Rado's Janens, where you fight through local-friendly towns known as Javets. We've also seen Alyahniclan and a snowy Russian forest containing a massive oil pipeline (possibly the Druzhba pipeline, the longest in the world). More interestingly, when OPM saw a target range tech demo - to show how objects react when shot - we saw English parking meters plus American mail boxes and fire hydrants.



- 1 The tracks**  
These three lines (green, red and blue) match up with the buttons on the controller (below). The green one plays the first record.
- 2 Free sample**  
The middle red track plays samples that have been taken from each record and can be triggered separately.
- 3 Push the button**  
Circles tell you to hit a button and 'play' part of a track. Triangles tell you to scratch or spin the deck while pressing a button.
- 4 Feel the effect**  
The orange cage shows when to use special effects such as filters and echoes to boost your score, dependent on timing.
- 5 Fade away**  
The blue track plays record two. As the line slides from left to right it shows when to use the cross fader.



# 3 Why we were wrong

(Because it turns out DJ Hero is a brilliant idea after all)

## Original Hero

Meanwhile, over in band land, Guitar Hero 5's big innovation will be Party Play mode. It enables players to create a playlist that people can drop in and out of at will. Instead of pausing or restarting the game to change difficulty or add instruments, anyone can press the PS button to join in at any time. You can also have any combination of instruments you want. There's also Band Hero on the way, which Activision is pitching as a family-friendly edition of the game, but isn't saying how exactly.

Guitar Hero rules because of the way the controller makes you feel part of the music. But despite a vague fantasy about Lindsay Lohan looking on adoringly as we dropped Burial remixes, we still weren't sold on the idea of DJ Hero. Scratching for points just didn't seem like much fun.

Then we saw the deck peripheral in action during a thunderous mash-up of Benny Benassi's Satisfaction and Black Eyed Peas' Boom Boom Pow. Ten seconds in we were desperate for a go. Kevin McSherry, studio manager for developer FreeStyleGames, explains, "There's an international

sign for being a DJ [mimes scratching a record with one hand to his ear] and we had to make that the game experience: get on a platter, start moving it and feel like you're controlling the music."

What's surprising is how well it works. Flicking the cross fader, twiddling knobs and scratching all feel real, although mistakes don't stand out enough yet. There are no jarring 'cock-up' noises – it needs the sound of a needle being torn across the vinyl to punish sausage fingers.

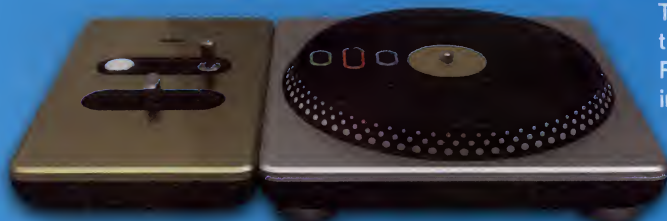
## In the mix

The controller would be nothing, though, if the music was rubbish. Fortunately the line-up is strong, including Gwen Stefani, Beastie Boys, Beck, Eric Prydz, Tears For Fears, Rick James, J-Five, Blondie, 50 Cent and David Bowie. Commercial director Chris Lee, says, "The great

thing about DJ Hero is that it doesn't limit us to any genre or era. The DJs have done an astonishing job of finding records that work well together and put a smile on your face." That's DJs such as Shadow, Z-Trip and Aim (plus more to be announced) who've all contributed mixes. And while the experience is mainly single-player, as you attempt to perfect each mix, there are also DJ vs DJ battle modes and ten tracks that enable guitarists, vocalists and deck wizards to perform together.

McSherry says all the artists involved have been impressed: "The Beastie Boys gave us a couple of tracks, and when they heard how we mixed them they gave us more." Lee also adds, "Some of the artists are planning their tours around the game's release."

DJ Hero will be released this winter. Send your dream mash-ups to [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)



# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



## 4 She's a mirror image

Is this the best cosplay ever?



**Posing!**



**Crouching!**



**Punching!**

Just when we think our clicking finger is broken from looking at cosplay galleries, we stumble across something like this. Forget lumpy teenagers in wigs, this shoot is so slick, so perfect in every detail, that they could be production stills from a *Mirror's Edge* film adaptation.

In fact, this is a fan project orchestrated by professional snapper Jesse James Allen. "I'd been trying to come up with the perfect project to shoot like a Hollywood movie," explains Allen, who usually snaps cars, rather than sexy free-runners. He chose *Mirror's Edge* after playing the game, and put in calls to friends, including a make-up artist from Universal Studios and someone who could provide a SWAT team costume for the bad guy. "The hardest part was pulling all the elements together: the costumes, the location and everyone's schedules!" As you can see, it worked out, and the internet was suitably impressed. "My Flickr photostream went nuts," Allen tells

us. "There were 10,756 hits in just three weeks!"

### First shoot

Hair stylist Yen Ryder is the one playing the part of Faith. She's not a professional model, and it took two months and a bit of luck to find her. "My wife was modelling for a burlesque photo shoot that Yen was working on and I got this call: 'Jess... you know that Asian model you're looking for? I've found her!'" And we're glad they did. Ryder's elfin looks are spot on. So the shoot just leaves us with one question: how come we never run into gorgeous Faith lookalikes in Wetherspoons?

Check out the whole shoot at Jesse James Allen's Flickr site, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jessejamesallen/pictures>



# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

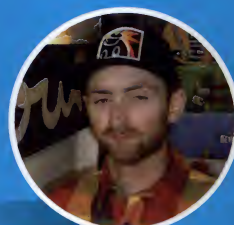
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## Is this the future of skating?

Hawk's gets gimmicky/genius new motion control board!

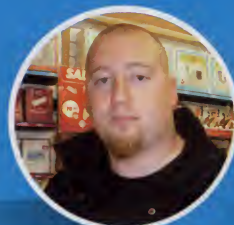


### Your verdict Skaters and gamers react



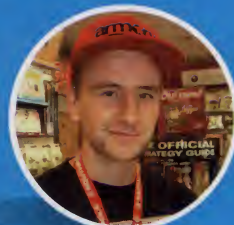
"From a skater's point of view I think it's a bit of a step too far. It's very gimmicky; I can see kids going for it but anyone who actually skates will probably frown on it to be honest."

**Jensen Derrick Sales**



"Being an ex-skater and biker when I was younger it does seem ideal; I probably will buy the game and use it. It looks quite good fun. Just like the Wii, really, where you can have a laugh with your mates."

**Jason Clark Recycling**



"I won't mind it being in my front room. It's taking the game to another level, like on the Wii. On a wet day when you can't go out skating, that's where it's at."

**Morton Mitchard**  
Student

the board to do grabs. The board stops short of actual tricks – it stays firmly on the ground at all times – but it's close enough. According to Tony Hawk himself, "Once you get into expert mode you have to either be very accomplished or know how to skate." Easier difficulty levels require less effort, simpler movements and will make the game accessible to even the clumsiest would-be skater.

To make the best of the new playing style everything has been created around the board. Levels now consist of two to four-minute sections, split across three disciplines. Trick

Sessions concentrate on stunts and scoring points, Challenge Sessions focus on scoring in specific areas and Speed Sessions involve racing against the clock. There are also pick-ups like score multipliers, extra time and speed boosts which suggest a more arcadey feel.

It's a brave move for the series and, considering the success of Guitar Hero and the Wii Balance Board, you might be looking at the next mainstream success story. Or a trip to casualty. Could go either way.

Tony Hawk's Ride will be released in December. Mail us your view on the board at [opr@futurenet.com](mailto:opr@futurenet.com).

#### The science bit

The board uses motion sensors and accelerometers to measure speed, tilt and angle. So snapping the board up and down quickly will perform an ollie while a sharp twist up and to one side will pull a kick flip. Manuals even require the same precise balancing they'd need in real life. There are also infrared sensors that detect when you grab the board or kick past it to gain speed.

Ever had a present you knew was coming and had to pretend to be surprised? Seeing Tony Hawk's Ride was like that. After all the chatter about 'a new direction' to take on EA's rival title Skate's Flickit analogue controls, and the rumours of an actual skateboard peripheral, we knew what to expect. So when the board was finally revealed, held aloft like a gnarly Excalibur at a recent UK event, we dutifully said our OMGs.

#### All aboard

What we weren't expecting was just how much the controller mimics actual skating. Unlike the Wii Balance Board there's more to this than just standing on it and leaning a bit. (Although the huge amounts of cash raked in by Nintendo's controller must have crossed Activision's mind more than once.) Moves mirror what you'd do in real life as you perform the motions for ollies or kick flips and pull 180s. You even have to physically hold



#### Dev talk

"If you're trying to design a game for a board you don't want to compromise by trying to design for every kind of controller. Ride is finely tuned for the board."

**Josh Tsui**  
President, Robomodo

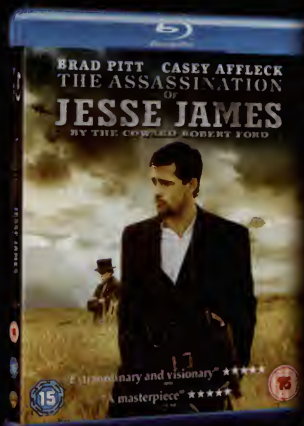
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# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

■ Messi's hair, skin texture and kit look incredibly lifelike – and Konami insists this shot is in-game.

■ Konami's Pro Baseball Spirits 5 was released before PES 2009, yet visually it hammered its footy bro.

Pro Evo  
vs PBS

6

## PES saved by baseball game?

New visuals seem to borrow from Pro Baseball Spirits

### Insider info

Konami is reluctant to release info on PES 2010, but the company's European team leader, Jon Murphy, recently blogged about his first hands-on with the game: "Goals are harder to score, with less down to luck or mistakes. Support for the man with the ball is also better. I really like what they're doing with penalties and strategies too. There's so much I could talk about, but I want to keep my job."

This year *has* to be a marquee one for Pro Evolution Soccer. Unchallenged king of all sports games throughout the noughties, its stranglehold on the genre is no more. Archrival FIFA is threatening to leave it trailing behind (see p66), and some would argue that the likes of NHL 09 and MLB 09: The Show already have. Konami can't afford to mess this one up.

So the Japanese publisher is promising an avalanche of improvements, starting with the visuals, which will finally give PES

2010 the next-gen look it's lacked so far on PS3. Just take a look at the shot of Lionel Messi: Konami insists that it's an *in-game* replay image, and the entire game will reach the same visual fidelity. As promises go, it's big, bold and exciting.

The most noticeable upgrade is in players' individual skin tones and hair textures. Instead of the dull colours and lumpy likenesses we endured in PES 2008 and 2009, players look like real people. It's as if Konami listened when we complained that PES lacked

the amazing looks of Japan-only PS3 stablemate Pro Baseball Spirits 5 – the visuals here are uncannily reminiscent of that game, which suggests tech-sharing going on behind the scenes. And given PBS5's accurately realised stadia, crowds and players, that's no bad thing. Even better-looking sequel PBS6 is due in July, and PES should further benefit from the graphical upgrades it offers.

We're also promised the crowds have been fixed. In the last two games the fans looked like Beau Geste-style



cardboard fakes. Now they're all in 3D, which will add massively to the big match atmosphere. Pitchside cameramen and officials have also been turned into 3D models, further upping the authenticity.

### Bright future

The other key aesthetic tweaks come in lighting and kit textures. They're the type of things that go largely unnoticed until you see the lifelike shadows and billowing shirts in a game like *The Show* and wonder why other games can't follow suit. Well, PES is trying. The effects of the sun and floodlighting, and the shadows cast on the pitch depending on the placement and angle of the stands, have been totally reworked, again with an eye on making it look real. Plus, Konami is working with manufacturers including Umbro and Adidas to ensure that the different weaves of each kit are replicated properly, and therefore crease and move correctly in-game. It's exactly

the sort of obsessive attention to detail that gets us excited.

But the mention of kits, no matter how carefully rendered their fabrics might be, raises our biggest worry – and where PES is concerned, it's a traditional one: unlicensed teams. While there will always be those willing to put in painstaking effort to create and share their own option files with correct kits and faces, the advent of Trophies mean that game saves are usually locked to a single profile – and that could hinder this popular process. It's another area where PES can borrow from *The Show*, where an online 'Roster Vault' hosts a catalogue of user-created roster files, which can be sorted by downloads, reader ratings, and so forth. Konami won't tell us if they've got a plan in place along these lines. But they need one, otherwise that marquee year they're hoping for – *and need* – simply ain't happening.

PES 2010 is out in October. For option file talk and discussion of the new features hit [pesfan.com](http://pesfan.com).

## 7 Win cash & kudos

### Show off your skills at GameOn! London

So you've spent precious hours telling internet forums, Facebook, Twitter, Captain Howdy and *anyone* else who will listen just how awesome you are at games. Now GameOn!, the UK's newest gaming event, will be your chance to prove it.

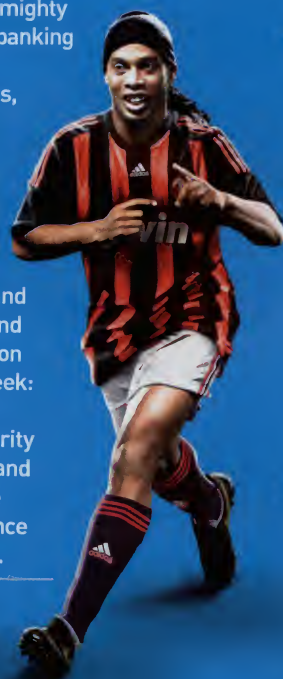
GameOn! is a massive exhibition that's happening on 20 and 21 June at Olympia in London. You'll be able to see the latest games from publishers such as EA and compete in the UKeSA Championship on games including FIFA 09. And you won't just be playing for bragging rights either, there are actual cash prizes on offer.

### Play time

20,000 gamers are expected to attend the two-day event, so the competition will be as strong as the smell of Lynx and testosterone that will surely fill the air. As well as the chance to watch the UKeSA Season One Grand Finals, where the super-skilled eSports teams compete for a mighty £40,000 prize, you can get a spanking going up against professional gamers in the Pro Zone. Noobs, cowards and the awkwardly cackhanded need not apply.

You can snap up your ticket at [tickets.hmv.com/gameonlondon](http://tickets.hmv.com/gameonlondon). The £8 price guarantees you entry to the UK gaming event of the year, and also enables you to walk around with a smug, do-gooding grin on your face for the rest of the week: 50p of every ticket sold will go directly to CLIC Sargent, a charity dedicated to helping children and young people with cancer. The chance to kick ass and rebalance our ruined karma? Go on then.

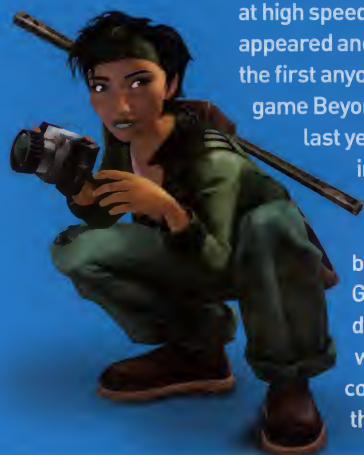
Get more info about GameOn! at the official site [gameonlondon.co.uk](http://gameonlondon.co.uk).



8

# Leaked footage of Jade's comeback

Beyond Good & Evil 2 appears online... but is it real?



A girl scrambles across a city, leaping, climbing and dodging bullets at high speeds. The footage, which appeared anonymously on the web, is the first anyone has seen of adventure game Beyond Good & Evil 2 since

last year. There's no other information to go with it, and no label that even links it to the game – but we know that Beyond Good & Evil 2 is in development, and we've been told that it continues the story from the first title. Besides,

Jade's look and Dai Jo staff are an unmistakable combination.

## Real deal?

The impressive footage shows Jade racing, Mirror's Edge-style, through an urban environment, pursued by men in black combat gear. She uses every inch of the terrain, scrambling through a tiny toilet window (to its occupant's surprise) and scampering up a drainpipe. The saris of the people she rushes past and a wandering cow suggest an Indian-style location. A close encounter with one man shows off Jade's Dai Jo

combat staff skills. As it ends she leaps off a roof and onto a helicopter, which flies off into the distance.

In the original game Jade was a rebel reporter on the planet Hillys, who, along with her piggy uncle Pey'J, uncovered the terrible plans of an alien race called the DomZ. The official teaser has already confirmed the return of Pey'J, but at time of writing Ubisoft declined to comment on the mysterious video. Frankly, if our game looked this good, we'd be all about taking the credit.

Is it real? Draw your own conclusion by watching the leaked footage for yourself at [anipurl.com/hxk2j](http://anipurl.com/hxk2j).

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18



PLAYSTATION 3



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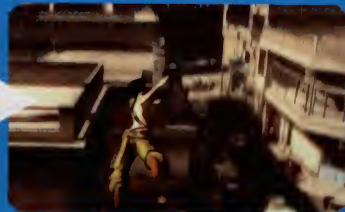
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# The Big 10

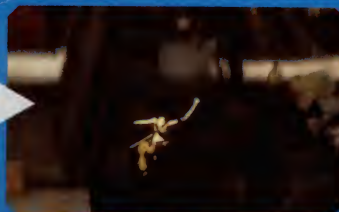
Stories everyone's talking about



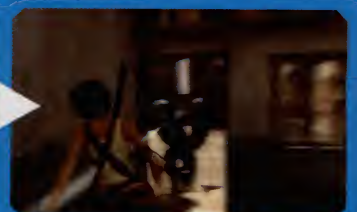
Race across a city's sun-bleached roofs...



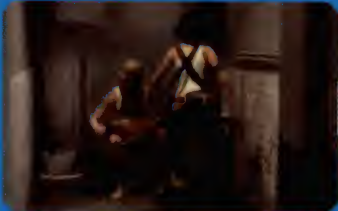
Jump from building to building...



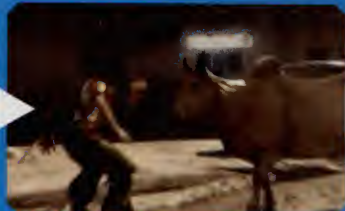
Down to the busy streets below...



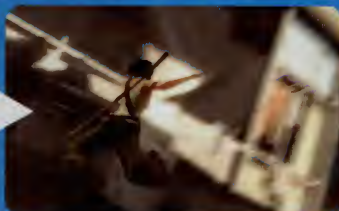
Dodge a bullet to the lower intestine...



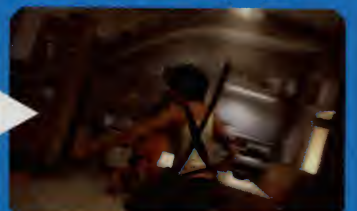
Ignore the occupied sign on the toilet door...



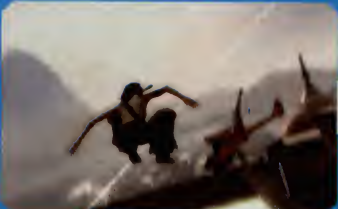
Turn left at the bemused-looking cow...



Take a shortcut with a giant leap...



Dash through a woman's kitchen...



Make for the helicopter hovering nearby...



Cross everything and take one final jump...



Clamber aboard your airborne saviour...



And fly off towards the misty mountains.



**12.06.09**

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■ This is 200% more 'girl' than usually turns up to our SingStar parties.

022

# 9 Where's the indie?

## SingStar boss explains how the songs are chosen



### History of Dave

Dave Ranyard started out as an AI programmer for Psygnosis (now SCE Studio Liverpool). He's since worked on Wipeout, The Getaway, EyeToy Play, 24 and Heavenly Sword, and was employed as the company's creative services manager when previous SingStar series director Paulina Bozek departed for Atari. In October 2008 Ranyard was promoted to the role in place of Bozek.

OPM loves SingStar. More than Guitar Hero, more than Rock Band, and certainly more than waiting to do actual karaoke in our local while a table of builders look on menacingly. Our one moan is with songs selected for the fortnightly SingStore updates. Lots of super-kitsch Europop and '80s power ballads, not enough classic hip hop and miserabilist indie. A couple of Morrissey songs and one Glasvegas track just aren't enough.

It's a criticism which SingStar series director Dave Ranyard politely refutes in an exclusive chat with us. "With music, I challenge you to get three people in a room to agree on everything," says Ranyard. "I love all different categories of music, and we want to please people and put up content they'll like. Both the team and the marketing department have wishlists, and they're always bigger than we need. We do our best. I'm really happy with the process of getting content out there."

Realistically, though, what are the

chances of seeing, say, Sonic Youth or PJ Harvey on the Store? Not as slim as you might think, reckons Ranyard: "With any big franchise like SingStar, diversification is something that will happen. I think the Store is a good living example of the 'long tail' theory. Artists like those are feasible, and something we're interested in – we don't sit around thinking, 'let's find another '80s song to use.' I think we're good at revealing fun songs."

### Lips shushed

As for SingStar's rivals, Ranyard says having them around is a good thing. "It's healthy and positive," he says. "It's getting more people into it as an activity. Singing in social situations has been around for centuries, and it feels like we're all supporting the 21st Century twist on that. Having two microphones has been an important attribute for us, making it a social experience with a bit of competition." But what about Lips, the Xbox 360's bandwagon jumper? Ranyard simply

brushes it off: "It hasn't had a huge impact on us. It doesn't have the community aspect we do – I look more at Rock Band and Guitar Hero as our competition."

Speaking of the mics, the long-desired wireless incarnations hit shops earlier this year. Ranyard says the team was "over the moon" that they're finally out, and gives a simple reason for the wait: "We worked for a long time getting the product right and the price right. We looked at Bluetooth technology initially, because you wouldn't have needed a receiver, but it had issues like delays. Then we looked at RF technology, and that's what is there now. They sound good, they feel solid, and they're a competitive price."

He's right – the new mics are sleek, robust, and work *perfectly*. Now we're just waiting for Sony to upload the Les Savy Fav back catalogue in its entirety and we'll be sorted.

SingStar wireless mics are available now, RRP £34.99. For more news on the game visit [singstargame.com](http://singstargame.com).

# The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



## 10 Does E3 really need booth babes?

OPM's boob experts argue over the pretty girls



### Yes

Says wannabe booth babe and lady lumps fan, **Rachel Penny**

Let's have a moment of honesty. At least 80% of people at the LA convention centre for E3 are men, and what do men like *even* more than games? Breasts! Booth babes come with those as standard and are an integral part of promoting games.

I'm not saying all men are obsessed with dirty pillows. Some men are gay, or see all women as demons. But for most, girls in bikinis are a good thing. It keeps the journos happy, making sure their copy is full of energy and hot opinion, rather than tears and apathy.

### Breast is best

And think of the poor PRs. Without pretty ladies to publicise their games they're left with developers to attract passing trade. You're a journalist – do you head for the greasy programmer in the ironic Gizmondo T-shirt, or the blonde in a Sonic bikini who's handing out lanyards and smiling like her life depends on it? The whole industry rests on their tanned, perfume-scented shoulders!

They banned booth babes in 2006, and a year later the whole shebang got downsized. Coincidence? I say not. This year the booth babes were back, and we need them to stay. Let us never underestimate the power of boobs again.



■ Living a life where you continually score games and (secretly) girls out of ten, plus the E3 tiredness factor, it's easy to get confused. Now was it an 8/10 for the game or the outfit?



### No

Says E3 veteran and gentleman gamer, **Tim Clark**

As of now I'm totally done with leggy Californian models in tight-fitting promotional T-shirts. And not because booth babes are demeaning to women (hey, it's a tough economy) or because it stops games from being taken seriously (car makers have been draping girls over their bonnets for years). No, my problem is that they're too much of a distraction for my jet lag-shrvelled brain.

When I'm seeing Assassin's Creed II, my coverage won't be improved by the presence of a 21-year-old aspirant actress dressed as a Renaissance-era brass standing so close I can smell her shampoo. Nor will my analysis of Gran Turismo 5 be lent any extra credence by a 19-year-old beauty lovelessly explaining the controls "It's ⊗ to accelerate, honey" from a distance at which I can feel her breath cooling as it hits my ear.

Then, as I'm waiting to see a game I know will need a miracle to score a 6, I'll start imagining actually trying to chat up the girl on the stand. Could that ever work? Maybe it could? *Maybe this is this how I meet Mrs Clark?* And that's when I know I've lost the run of myself. E3 is a frantic, cruel battle in which my mission isn't to find a model/actress wife, it's to bring you piping hot opinion, the choicest quotes, the biggest games and...

Hate women, boobs or just casual sexism? Text: Babe No to 87474.

Love seeing pictures of the E3 ladies in the mag? Text: Babe Yes to 87474.

023

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Informer

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New kit beamed down from the Sony mothership.

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Your gamer's guide to the month ahead.

## Copywrong

What about other user-created content?

### Guitar Hero World Tour

Uploaded cover versions have been deleted en masse since the game's launch. Allowing homemade user versions would seriously annoy the record companies who are vital to the series' success.

### Far Cry 2

This hasn't seen much in the way of intellectual property 'borrowing', bar an ingenious Millennium Falcon built out of scenery. Replicas of level layouts from shooters like Halo exist, but little official action has been taken.

### Unlabeled PlayStation 3

There hasn't been much controversy around copyright on PS3, but with mods being distributed online and no officially moderated central server, we've seen everything from Metroid to Master Chief appear unpunished.

# Is your LBP level legal?

## Dos and don'ts of LittleBigPlanet design

LittleBigPlanet has caused a revolution, bringing create-and-share content to console in the most incredible way. But it's also raised questions. We've read post after caps-filled post online complaining that uploaded levels have been moderated out of existence. And the main reason for the deletions? Copyright violation.

Fans inevitably want to craft levels inspired by their favourite games and movies, but however well-intentioned, they're technically illegal. Copyright infringement covers designs, images, music and anything that can be construed as obviously imitating an existing intellectual property.

It's okay to use copyrighted material in satire, as long as you use it to comment on or poke fun at the original work (though you can't use more than is necessary to make your point). Naturally the general idea of Italian plumbers can't be protected, but stick a moustachioed sackboy wearing red dungarees in a parody-free, mushroom

land and Nintendo might get interested.

The problem is working out where the line is drawn. Players can protest that because the levels don't make money for their creators, there's no crime. But that's not the point. Permission is still required to use someone else's material.

### Feeling violated

But isn't it free advertising for the companies involved? Well yes, but an obvious imitation of a Mario game (for example) within a Sony game will still be seen as a rival trading on Nintendo's intellectual property. Only Nintendo can make Mario games.

However, Sony is working with companies like Capcom and Square Enix to produce officially licensed sackboy costumes. While it's true that some players have accused Sony of confusing matters by seeming to encourage the use of licensed material, the fact is that the use of any player-made material not covered by those deals (ie anything that you don't buy directly from the PSN Store) damages potential future licensing contracts for Sony and LBP. So official Sephiroth sackboys are fine, but your own, sticker-faced version isn't.

So what's the official advice? Mr Sam\_Protagonist, senior community development manager on the official LBP forum, says to stay clear of creating, transferring, sending, submitting, sharing, uploading anything "protected by copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret or otherwise subject to third-party proprietary rights, including but not limited to rights of privacy and publicity (unless you are or have permission from the rightful owner)".

Phew. So, in other words steer clear of anything in the slightest bit dubious if you want to be sure that your level doesn't get whacked. Which might sound extreme, but hey – in a game based around the joy of creativity, isn't it best to come up with your own ideas?



## RUMOUR MACHINE

Insider whispers

Guitar Hero is getting its own TV show. We doubt it will be able to drag us away from Fringe.



Undeterred by the average reviews, Capcom has greenlit a Bionic Commando sequel. (Lose the dreads, guy.)



Criterion Games (of Burnout and Black fame) is working on a Need For Speed reboot, due out in 2010.

Wookiee woe. Star Wars: Battlefront III won't make it to PS3.

Treyarch's Call Of Duty 7 will be set in the '60s and use Vietnam and Cuba as locations.



DJ Hero has a rival in Scratch: The Ultimate DJ, which features MP3 support.

Blerg! Matthew McConaughey is being tipped to play the hero, our beloved Nathan Drake, in the upcoming Uncharted movie.



# Hello dolly

## Superfan crafts Bioshock 2 Big Daddy doll

A quick look at this doll's corkscrew, wire and pins tells us it won't be appearing in the Early Learning Centre any time soon. This isn't a toy for kids, it's one gamer's tribute to Bioshock 2. After seeing the toy in the sequel's teaser trailer, hanging limply from the hand of a girl staring out to sea, Aussie animation student Nathan Alexander decided to make his own.

"I pretty much decided that I wanted to make the doll as soon as I saw it," says Alexander. The body is made from a piece of balsa wood that Alexander sanded into shape. "I nearly took off my fingers."

Despite offers of hard cash the doll isn't for sale, but Alexander will make more, "better ones, now that I have more material to reference from," and put them up for auction. Keep up with his projects at [supman098.deviantart.com](http://supman098.deviantart.com). And we might be seeing more game-related merchandise soon. "I'm curious about the new Assassin's Creed and the gadgets in that game – there might be something that will spark the creative flare..."

### Ball games

The Daddy's head is a baseball, his arms are made of rope, and wire and nails make up his face.

### Doll parts

The drill is made out of a piece of steel twisted into shape to make cuddles super exciting.

## Driller killer

You're the daddy now...

Bioshock 2 is set ten years after the events of the original game, and the main hook is that you'll get to play as the first ever Big Daddy, complete with diving suit, industrial drill and Plasmid powers. The multiplayer mode, though, is set during the fall of aquatic city Rapture. Turn to page 38 now for the full preview.





# Shot to the heart

A tale of love, guns and mutants

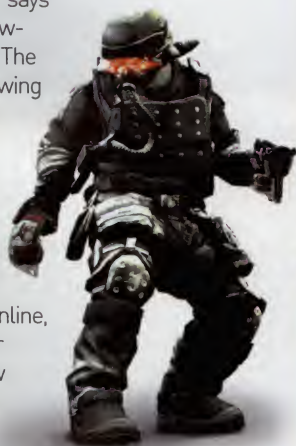
Okay, so Killzone 2's Helghans are murderous space fascists, but hey they still have feelings. At least that's what short film Lovezone wants you to think. (Catch the video at [snipurl.com/h5duy](http://snipurl.com/h5duy), where you'll also find Resident Evil 5 recreated with muppets.)

Lovezone chronicles the romantic story of a Helghan couple, complete with pink breathing tubes and tiny mutant offspring. "Mrs Helghast was played by the extraordinarily brave Nelson Castro and an armful of socks stuffed into a DDD bra," reveals writer and producer Jay LaPlante. His wife Judy Haubert supplied Mrs H's voice.

The costumes were homemade, and

the guns are just painted Nerf Recon toy rifles. "God bless Nerf," says LaPlante. "They make creating low-budget sci-fi weaponry possible." The hardest part was creating the glowing eyes – they had to be added to the film in post production, frame by painful frame. Filming the battle scenes in New York was no easy task either: "New Yorkers are pretty prickly about people with gas masks and guns."

Despite the video's popularity online, LaPlante hasn't heard from either Guerrilla or Sony. "I'd love to know what they think," he says. "Unless they think they want to sue me."



## WHO SAID THAT?

VIP quotes



"F\*\*\* THE MOTHER F\*\*\*ING PS3!"

**David Jaffe** breaks his dev kit again.

"I played Fallout 3 so often I had to go to a hand doctor."

**Matthew Perry** gets friendly with the mutants.



"I'd like to continue making games until I die."



**Hideo Kojima** will be carried out of the office in a box.

"Worst videogame bosses ever? Email yr suggestions to [gameswipe@zeppotron.com](mailto:gameswipe@zeppotron.com). Make what you will of that email address." **Charlie Brooker** is so making Gameswipe.

## OPM HOT TOPIC

Why aren't there more comedy games?



**Patrick Fortier**  
Creative director,  
A2M

"I find games take themselves way too seriously these days. I'm thrilled to be working on a project [WeI] that embraces its over-the-top nature and likes poking fun at itself."



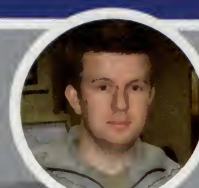
**Richard Jones**  
Lead games designer,  
Rebellion Liverpool

"Comedy can be a very hard subject to emote in videogames. It's like trying to make someone laugh at every stand up comedian – not everyone finds the same thing funny."



**Nick Baynes**  
Game director,  
Black Rock

"Even the best joke in the world stops being funny when you've heard it 100 times. That's the problem with 'comedy games' – keeping players laughing after ten hours of gameplay."



**David Brickley**  
Executive producer,  
Codemasters

"Lots of people think they are funny but actually aren't – comedy is not easy, and it relies heavily on culture, while big games need to sell worldwide."



## Good grief

After hours of abuse online, this is the exact moment Leon Hurley snapped

"You guys suck. You f\*\*\*ing suck... Seriously, why are you even bothering to play? You. *Suck.*" It had been going on for a while. At the end of every round, the same torrent of insults. Admittedly we were losing, but Killzone 2 had only been out a few weeks and the person shouting – let's call him, I dunno, Dave – was on our team. This wasn't the enemy trying to psyche us out. It was one of our own trash-talking; the nasal, whingey American voice droning like distant chainsaws felling trees. It was starting to get me down.

Now I'm no angel. If I'm playing with strangers I often take my headset off to avoid accidentally blasting a stream of high-volume, laser diode-blue language at someone. It's not so much that the level of filth would make a builder flinch, as it is the experimental linguistic combinations that are fused in the heat of the moment. Turns out you can do a lot with the big swear words by adding '...ing' to the end. It's like an infinite loop combo for profanity. Anyway, the

The oddest thing was that he kept coming back. Three games? Four? I forget how long it took before I snapped. I had originally dipped into the options to mute him out, but then I saw 'file grief report'. Partly curious, partly excited, but mainly just jacked up on a combo of posh supermarket pizza and Fosters I hit it, selected 'trash talk' from the options and, with only a flicker of hesitation, pressed enter.

Christ it was satisfying. I mean like a skin-tingling thrill. This wasn't barking back a fleeting



## "You can do a lot with the big swears by adding 'ing'."

point is, I make sure it's done in private, more or less, bar the cat and the man who lives upstairs. I might aim it at specific people, a game, lag, the internet, but I don't offend anyone directly.

### Putting the trash out

Dave did. He made it clear that he held everyone on his team responsible. Every time we dropped the Propaganda Speaker, lost a zone or failed an objective, twangy repercussions echoed across the headset. The inevitable "*suck!*" punctuating each sentence like the snare in a drum loop. The facts were undeniable: we were losing, but not massively. I certainly wouldn't call it a caning. More importantly, we were having fun; people were supporting each other and working together. Apart from the 'not winning' bit, it was about as good as it gets online. Dave only cared about the winning.

rebuttal. This was like tipping the police off anonymously about the neighbour from hell's all-night party weekend extravaganza. I pictured an official letter landing on his mat. Or better yet, two stern men in suits with earpieces standing on his porch saying, "Sir, we have reason to believe you suck. May we come inside?" Before forcing their way in, checking the street as they shut the door ominously behind them.

Unlikely, I know. The truth is that somewhere a counter on the Killzone 2 servers clicked up a notch and probably nothing else happened. Secretly, however, I sort of hope it was enough to tip Dave's rep over the edge and get him in trouble. Petty and vindictive, yes, but I've played online for years, putting up with all kinds of BS from crybaby bad losers, so the opportunity to give a little back was something to be savoured. Hang on, what happens to grasses again?

## LETTER FROM HOME

An impatient Nathan Dittum can't stand the pedestrian speed of pretend reality

I may have a problem. Despite all the cool stuff I've done in Home this month – failed to understand Xi properly, dressed up like an engineer from Star Trek: The Next Generation, visited the flash new EA Sports space – I've been constantly on the point of exploding. Why? Because I'm sick of loping around the place like a valium-dosed astronaut in a Zero-G training simulator. I'm the sort of impatient madman who runs after buses and swears silently at the back of slow-moving old people's heads. Not having a run button in Home – especially given the GTA-born reflex of hitting ⊗ just in case – is driving me crazy. Can you patch it, Sony? Please.





### Samsung HMX R10 camcorder

Not only is it the world's smallest full HD camcorder, the wonky angled lens makes using one easier on the wrists. Because they're tired from all that gaming you do, yeah?

**£370**

[camerabox.co.uk](http://camerabox.co.uk)

### Headphonies

Lure emo girls into your dungeon/office with a trail of these adorable desktop speakers. Note: they will self-destruct if you attempt to play Kismet on them.

**£20**

[headphonies.com](http://headphonies.com)



### Panasonic Z1 plasma

At just an inch thick it's Lohan-skinny, but this baby can also wirelessly stream content from YouTube. It's a cat playing a keyboard! Again! Brilliant.

**£4,200**

[panasonic.co.uk](http://panasonic.co.uk)



### Morfojet armchair

Get that I build furniture from plane crash debris' look and look up your PS3 in the built-in sound system. Space idrol headwear optional!

**£8,800**

[morfojet.com](http://morfojet.com)

# Want that

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people

### Gold Bullion mouse

Be the talk of the office with some ostentatious desk furniture. It'll go perfectly with that diamond encrusted stapler you bought on eBay.

**£25**

[iwantoneofthose.com](http://iwantoneofthose.com)



Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press.

# Sony Ericsson

## Idou

Say 'cheese' – it's Sony's 12.1MP iPhone rival



ETBA  
sonyericsson.com/idou

### In a nutshell

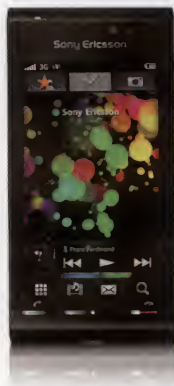
When it comes to supplanting the iPhone as today's pre-eminent object of aspirational techno-lust, are higher specs even the issue? Well, they better bloody well be, or Sony Ericsson's dizzyingly capable 12 Megapixel, 3.5-inch touch-screen uber phone could find itself the most beautiful, intelligent and beguiling wallflower at the Want-One high school disco. Still, if someone cloned Jesus, giving him rocket-powered rollerblades and laser-beam eyes, you'd at least be *tempted* to trade in Jesus 1.0, right?

### What's so special?

As it happens, the sophisticated new Japano-Swedish Messiah in question is bringing plenty to the upwardly mobile telephonic party. Combining the Symbian Foundation's new portable-platform OS (it's open-source, meaning potentially thousands of apps) with an iPhone-equalling 3.5-inch touch-screen is a great start. Then there's that class-leading 12.1 Megapixel Cyber-shot camera. That's a photo sensor *six times* better than the current iPhone's Vermeer-era 2MP camera obscura, and four times better than the next iPhone's predicted 3.2MP unit.

### Tell me more...

Cash-rich abbreviation aficionados will doubtless enjoy the Idu's built-in WiFi 802.11 b/g, GPS with geotagging – 'Look mum, I'm in a Bangkok jail. CU N 10YRS :-[' – HSDPA, 7.2 Mbps (super-fast downloads), HSUPA, 3.6 Mbps (speedy uploads), and A2DP stereo Bluetooth, while everyone else in the pub will just appreciate its Bale-era Batman styling and the fact that, well, it isn't *another bloody iPhone*. "Yes, you're drinking a virtual pint on it. Brilliant."



### The facts

- 12.1 Megapixel camera
- 3.5" TFT touch-screen with accelerometer sensor
- MicroSD card slot
- WLAN WiFi 802.11 b/g
- Bluetooth 2.0 with A2DP
- Assisted GPS
- FM Radio with RDS

### The screen

While not a bleeding-edge OLED unit, the Idu's 3.5-inch TFT (thin-film transistor) touch-screen is an impressively sharp, 16-million colour window into a world of maudlin Twitter status updates, Cover Flow-style Kraftwerk album browsing and photos of Mr Mittens awkwardly posed to look like he's playing PS3.



## The camera

While it's true that when it comes to digital photo quality, the size of the sensor is ultimately more of a deal maker/breaker than the number of pixels packed onto it, the Ido's 12MP unit is something special and the first time this kind of resolution has been found outside of the cumbersome SLR cameras favoured by professional photographers, serial killers and professional-photographer serial killers.

## Memory

In a surprising but gratifying change of heart the Ido's memory slot rejects Sony's proprietary Memory Stick M2 cards in favour of the ubiquitous (as in, every single other mobile manufacturer in the entire world uses them) MicroSD cards. This is a good thing, as it's probably the only type you'll be able to afford after forking out for the phone in the first place.



# PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

▲ Up ▼ Down ● Non mover + New entry

## PS3

- 1 ▲ FIFA 09
- 2 ▼ X-Men Origins Wolverine
- 3 ▼ Killzone 2
- 4 ● Resident Evil 5
- 5 ▲ LittleBigPlanet
- 6 ▲ Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection
- 7 ▲ Call Of Duty World At War
- 8 ▼ Street Fighter IV
- 9 ▲ Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare
- 10 ▼ The Godfather II

Source [chart-track.co.uk](http://chart-track.co.uk)

## PS2

- 1 ▲ Ben 10 Alien Force
- 2 ▲ Call Of Duty World At War
- 3 ▼ X-Men Origins Wolverine
- 4 ▼ FIFA 09
- 5 ▼ Monsters vs Aliens
- 6 ▲ WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009
- 7 ▼ Tomb Raider Underworld
- 8 ▼ Need For Speed Undercover
- 9 ▲ Persona 4
- 10 ▼ Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja 4

Source [chart-track.co.uk](http://chart-track.co.uk)

## PSP

- 1 ● FIFA 09
- 2 ▲ Football Manager 2009
- 3 ▼ Resistance Retribution
- 4 ▲ Ben 10 Alien Force
- 5 ▼ X-Men Origins Wolverine
- 6 ▲ Need For Speed Undercover
- 7 ▼ Dynasty Warriors Strikeforce
- 8 ▲ Ubisoft Action Pack
- 9 ● Midnight Club LA Remix
- 10 ▲ Lego Batman

Source [chart-track.co.uk](http://chart-track.co.uk)

# The PlayStation entertainment plan

Fill up your life with our monthly guide

Monday



Tuesday

JUN 09

## Issue 33 on sale

Absorb the righteous ins and outs, hard facts you're holding right now, then fire off an angry rebuttal/marriage proposal. [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)

Wednesday

10

## England vs Andorra

Don Fabio's campaign continues against Andorra and we're looking for something convincing. Watch it live on Setanta. [setanta.com](http://setanta.com)

Thursday



Friday

12

## The house that dripped blood

The Last House On The Left, a remake of 1972's exploito-horror of the same long name, is out today. [thelasthouseontheleft.com](http://thelasthouseontheleft.com)

Saturday

Sunday



16

## Bustin' on Blu-ray

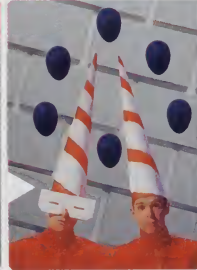
To coincide with the game's release, the original Ghostbusters movie slimes its way onto Blu-ray. Finally, proton streams in glorious HD. [ghostbusters.com](http://ghostbusters.com)



19

## Pop art

Pop was once made by serious old men, not drama school scum. Find out how by watching the Pet Shop Boys at the O2 arena. [petshopboys.co.uk](http://petshopboys.co.uk)



22

## Que Sera

Indie girls' crush of the moment Michael Cera is the sexually non-threatening hero in Nick And Norah's Infinite Playlist, out on Blu-ray today. [sonypictures.com/movies/nickandnorah](http://sonypictures.com/movies/nickandnorah)

23

## Big Batarang

Pick up Batman Arkham Asylum Collector's Edition and get a 14-inch Batarang to throw at your dad. [batmanasylum.com](http://batmanasylum.com)

24

## Electric dreams

The Transformers return to the cinema in Revenge Of The Fallen. Will there be anything to equal the wretched 'Ssssh, we're hiding' scene? [transformersmovie.com](http://transformersmovie.com)



27

28

## Summer sounds

Dig out your designer wellies and see Lily Allen and Kasabian at Glastonbury Festival. [glastonburyfestivals.co.uk](http://glastonburyfestivals.co.uk)

## Big boss

Bruce Springsteen arrives in Hyde Park with his heartland rock and expansive collection of hats and leather waistcoats. [bruce.springsteen.net](http://bruce.springsteen.net)



JUL 01

## Extra cool

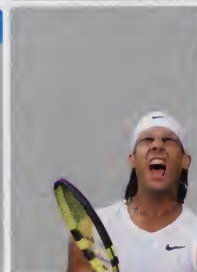
Did you hear the one about the mammoth, the sabre-toothed tiger and the sloth? Ice Age: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs is out in cinemas today. [icesage3.com](http://icesage3.com)



03

## Blood brothers

Win a gold PS3 (see opposite page) to celebrate the release of Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood. [callofjuarez.com](http://callofjuarez.com)



05

## Balls please

It's the Wimbledon men's final. Will it be another spectacular to add to the Federer/Nadal archive? [wimbledon.org](http://wimbledon.org)



06

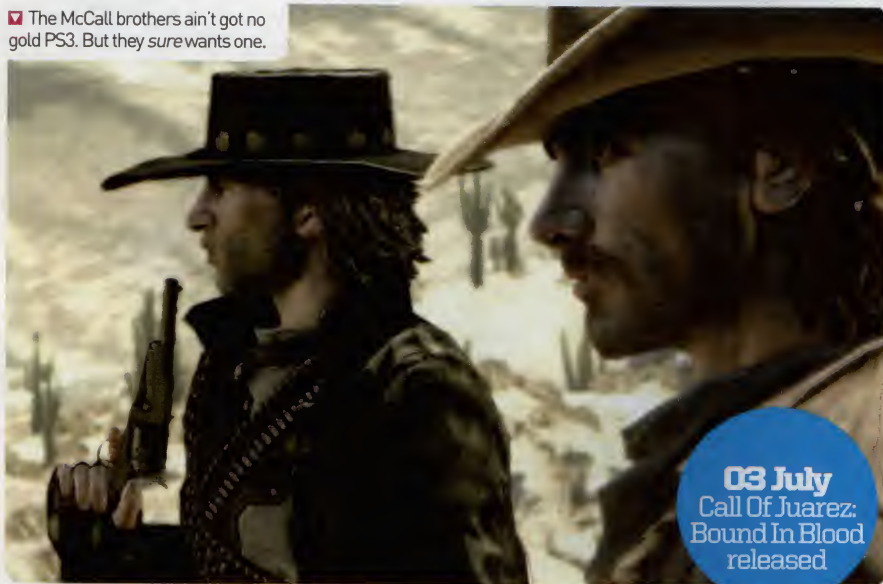
## Plain crazy

Is she actually hot? Maddeningly, we still can't tell. Try to decide today, as pop princess Lady Gaga drops her latest single, Paparazzi. [ladygaga.com](http://ladygaga.com)

**07 July**  
Issue 34 on sale.  
Subscribe now on page 24



❑ The McCall brothers ain't got no gold PS3. But they *sure* wants one.



**03 July**  
Call Of Juarez:  
Bound In Blood  
released

## Win a gold-plated PS3!

Courtesy of the Call Of Juarez cowboys

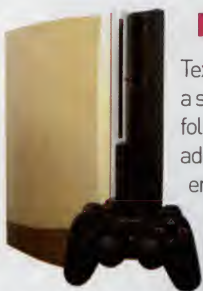
What's better than sharp-shooting your way through the Wild West with the McCall brothers? Doing it while basking in the glow of a PS3 plated with 24 carat gold, obviously. To celebrate the release of Ubisoft's new rootin' tootin' shooter Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood we're giving away a specially made console and a copy of the game for one lucky reader. To be in with a shot of winning, all you have to do is correctly answer this question...

Which developer is making  
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood?

**A REBELLION** **B TECHLAND** **C STARBREEZE**

Text using the word 'Blood' followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name and address to 87474. Alternatively, you can enter at [futurecomps.co.uk/opm33](http://futurecomps.co.uk/opm33). The winner will be picked at random from all the correct entries. Closing date: 7 July 2009.

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## FIVE MINUTE SKIVE

Games to play  
when the boss  
isn't looking



### Scarygirl

No, not the ex who keeps writing increasingly dark erotic poetry on your Facebook wall. This crazy cute platformer stars a tiny emo chick who's got a hook for a hand and a taste for fresh fish.

[scarygirl.com](http://scarygirl.com)



### Penguinz

Not so much happy feet as trigger happy - we always knew there was something off-key about these flightless freaks. Give them an AK47 and a bandanna and suddenly they become ruthless killers.

[snipurl.com/gizfl](http://snipurl.com/gizfl)



### Host Master And The Conquest Of Humor

Help Tim Schafer find the 22 jokes in his dressing room. Which involves sucking a mushroom-flavoured lolly and poking a polar bear in the eye.

[snipurl.com/mingam](http://snipurl.com/mingam)



## FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

This month we visit  
**OPS2 #48**

We made not one but two covers for our blow-out **Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas** exclusive in issue #48, modestly subtitled "The most important videogames feature in history". Both use the series' trademark shadow-and-light cartoon artwork, one with gesturing gangster types, and the other (our fave, see above) with a hot lip-licking girl in shades. Initial impressions of the game? "It's b\*\*\*tard impressive."

In news, we handled the first **PSP** to arrive in the UK, several months ahead of launch. "Warm plastic, smooth curves," we drooled, "and buttons that almost seem to whisper, 'Touch me, I don't mind it.'" We also revealed screenshots of its launch line-up, which included **Need For Speed Underground**, **Tony Hawk's Underground**, **Wipeout Pure** and **Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf**. Other excitements came from **Call Of Duty: Finest Hour**, **Black** and a strip session (don't ask) on **EyeToy Chat**.

Riding the previews bus were **Spider-Man 2** ("not just another knocked-off movie licence"), **Second Sight** ("a refreshingly original sci-fi blast"), **Timesplitters Future Perfect** ("stunning") and **The Getaway: Black Monday**, for which ed Stephen Pierce was scanned and ended up looking like "the result of a sexual union between Ray Reardon and The Mekon".

Reviews started with **Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow**, which earned 8/10 ("more of a Splinter Cell 1.5"), peaked with 9/10s for **Mashed** ("reason to make a hermit buy a multitap") and **Onimusha 3** ("lovingly crafted") and fell down with **GT-R 400**, scoring 3/10 and described as "the racing equivalent of trying to get glue off your finger".

# LET THE RACING COMMENCE



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Preview

38

## BIOSHOCK 2

Winners don't use drugs. In Bioshock 2's multiplayer mode they use DNA-altering Plasmids and a big wrench.

# PlayStation<sup>®</sup> Official Magazine - UK Previews

037

Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

**N**ot sure how Bioshock's innovative gameplay can possibly work online? The answer lies over the page. You may have seen info floating around online, but we're the only PlayStation mag to visit the studio making the multiplayer mode. We've been Mr Bubbles.

After your visit to the city under the sea comes Singularity, the new sci-fi shooter about Russian time-travel experiments. And as we discovered, it looks like the development team on that one has also been playing a lot of Bioshock.

Next up is satanic hack and slash Dante's Inferno, which owes an equally obvious debt to God Of War. In both cases it's no bad thing, though, as each new game offers a fresh spin on an already successful template.

And for anyone who's feeling sociable, we've got two MMOs for you. The Agency lets you get your Bond on while DC Universe focuses on superpowers. Both, however, need teamwork – just like OPM. And Twix. OPM definitely needs Twix.



42

## SINGULARITY

Imagine an 18-rated Doctor Who with evil mutants, automatic weapons, Spetsnaz and the ability to instantly age your enemies to death. So, *nothing* like Doctor Who really.



45

## ASHES CRICKET 2009

Long-standing frontman Brian Lara is out, and so is arcadey gameplay as Codies' cricket series gets serious. Contextual batting and bowling are a very good start.



46

## BAYONETTA

It's all about a beautiful witch who fights demons and gets naked all the time because she turns her clothing into magical attacks. And, so... naked... yes.



Preview

## Quick pitch

### I predict a riot

Take part in the civil war that originally tore underwater city Rapture apart.

### Gene therapy

Fighting online earns you more Plasmids, Tonics, weapons and upgrades.

### Father issues

Find the Big Daddy suit hidden on each level and you can smash the opposition to pulp.

Hype Magnet **Format** PS3 **ETA** Winter **Pub** Take Two **Dev** 2K Marin/Digital Extremes

# Bioshock 2

△ Daddies ○ Splicers × Plasmids □ Online

✔ Play as a Big Daddy online and everyone will be out to get you.



If I use Electro Bolt on you and you're stunned for six seconds, you're going to be pissed," says senior producer Melissa Miller, as she explains the changes made for Bioshock's online multiplayer mode. And she's not wrong. So while familiar Plasmid power-ups like Electro Bolt, Incinerate and Winter Blast all return, their effects have been tweaked with a view to keeping the online action entertaining. So stun times are

slashed to make sure shocked players at least have a fighting chance while Winter Blast now slows rather than freezes.

### Undersea civil war

The multiplayer component of Bioshock 2 is completely separate from the single-player story mode in which you play the original Big Daddy. For starters, there's an 11-year time



▲ Rosie-type Big Daddies pack heat in the shape of a massive rivet gun.

difference between the settings. The online modes still tie into the overall plot but now the year is rewound to 1959, long before Bioshock hero Jack's plane ditched into the Atlantic Ocean, and the civil war that tore manic industrialist

Andrew Ryan's undersea paradise apart is just about to start. For you and your chosen character – any one of ten everyman citizens like a welder, businessman or housewife – that means enrolling in Sinclair Solution's Plasmid and Gene Tonic product testing program.

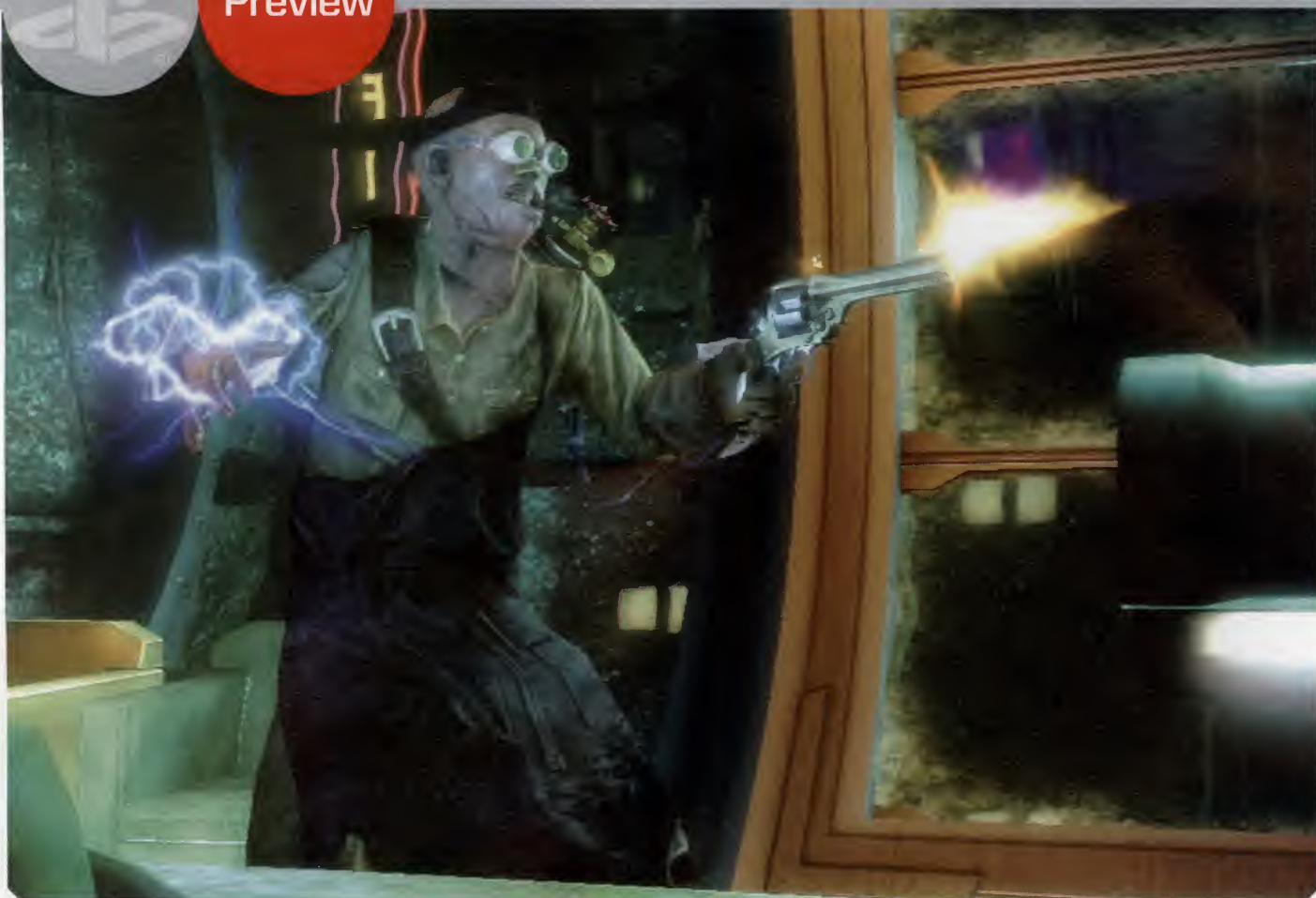
While 2K Marin crafts the single-player game, Dark Sector developer Digital Extremes is working on the online portion. They've had to refine a number of features to make a workable multiplayer system out of Bioshock's single-player focus. Bioshock 2's Plasmid upgrades carry through to multiplayer but you no longer toggle between guns and Plasmids. Instead, Plasmids become chargeable secondary fire modes triggered at any time, which keeps the pace of gunplay fast while increasing your range of attacking options. ➔



▲ Rapture's war saw everyday folk like housewives take up arms.



Preview



## "The online team is unafraid to shake up the original's formula."

Abilities such as the Electro Bolt might have had their power decreased, but the streamlined controls mean there's greater potential for Plasmid interplay.

### The splice is right

New additions Aero Dash and Geyser are good examples of how you can use Plasmids creatively. The first grants the ability to burst forward a short distance, either to ram an opponent or to bridge gaps across ledges. Geyser, meanwhile, is a placed weapon that catapults players towards hard-to-reach ledges or smashes them into

low ceilings, depending on where it's positioned. Mix these Plasmids with some of the more basic choices and you end up with even more options. So follow Geyser with an Electro Bolt and you can unleash a devastating one-two punch, while Aero Dashing splicers can find their attack cancelled by a well-timed Winter Blast.

Most of the action we experienced involved tearing around the maps with one Plasmid fully charged and ready to rip. The combined force of a full fireball to the groin followed by a shotty blast or wrench blow nearly



always guarantees an instant kill. The wrench in particular seems *really* powerful, so despite all the genetic shenanigans and full-auto anger you can unleash, a good solid smack to the face with a glorified spanner is often the best option. Fortunately, Plasmids don't have a huge blast radius so you can dodge them if you're prepared.

Overall the combat feels slower and more cerebral than most shooters. You can't move too quickly or jump very high, so it's more about choosing your Plasmids carefully and having a clear plan of attack.

The Plasmids and other power-ups, such as Gene Tonics and weapon upgrades, aren't found just lying about.

## 5 big questions How does the multiplayer work?

1

### What's the story?

You're working as a Plasmid tester as the multiplayer matches re-enact Rapture's civil war. Pros: superpowers. Cons: slight chance of monstification.

2

### Who's the daddy?

You are, if you can find the Rosie diving suit which powers up attacks but cancels your regenerating health. Otherwise you're just a 'normal' splicer.

3

### Is there character customisation?

Tonics, Plasmids and upgrades are all unlocked as you increase your rank. Just like COD's Perks, only for DNA rather than guns.

4

### How many game types are there?

Three: deathmatch, team deathmatch and a secret mode no one is talking about yet. Our guess? Capture The Little Sister.

5

### Why do I have an apartment?

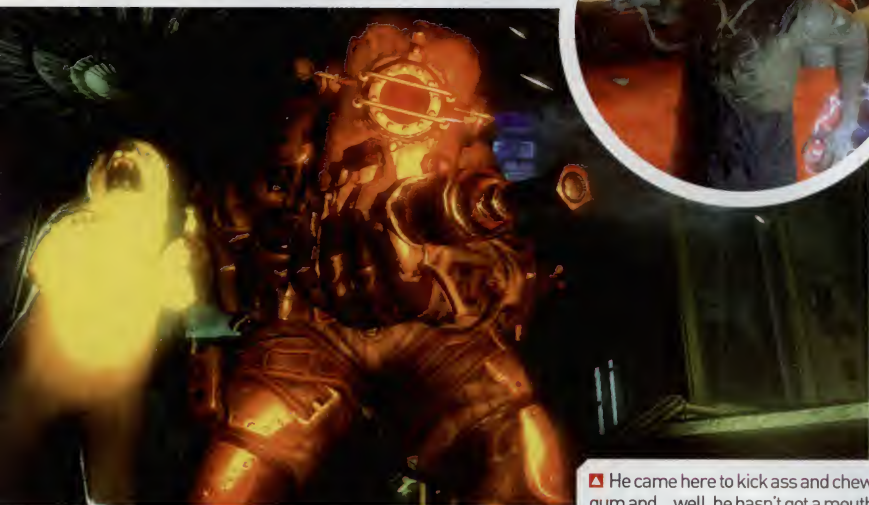
It's better than a set of menus. In your flat you can set up Plasmids and weapons before a match and check for messages and any upgrades earned.



❑ Taking on a Big Daddy with a frying pan? Proof that Plasmids drive you crazy.



❑ Combat relies on tactically combined Plasmid attacks and conventional weapons to max out the damage inflicted.



❑ He came here to kick ass and chew gum and... well, he hasn't got a mouth.



❑ Loadouts and abilities are chosen before each match.

In fact, the multiplayer maps have relatively few pick-ups. Health, EVE boosters and ammunition are the only items to collect. Instead, weapons and abilities are chosen before a bullet has even been fired, back at your place – a spacious apartment with a stunning view of Rapture – which doubles as a pre-match multiplayer hub.

In the safe confines of your pad you're free to browse messages from your employer Sinclair Solutions and monitor which bonuses they've

awarded you. The more battles you win the more you'll gain, and completing optional trials (such as scoring five kills with a Winter Blast-to-melee combo) will increase your rank even faster.

On your desk sit three loadout templates to be filled with whatever you've unlocked. Each has space for two Plasmids, a brace of weapons (plus a single upgrade for each) and three Tonics. You can then chop and change between these setups each

time you spawn, choosing the one that best suits the flow of battle.

## Daddy cool

There's one bonus that isn't in your apartment: Rosie-type Big Daddy suits, which randomly drop into maps. Collecting one sacrifices regenerative health for a rivet gun, mines and a stronger melee attack. A Big Daddy will be harder to take down but players can use fixed turrets and ammo dispensers to help them (mercifully without the single-player mini-game). Hacked turrets attack other enemies while hacked dispensers emit an electric shock if approached from the front. Big Daddies like neither.

One big change is that the respawning Vita-Chambers have been ditched. It's easy to see why: too few and it'll be a camper's dream as people sit in wait, plugging saps as they step out of a booth. Too many and there won't be any challenge. The fact that the online team is unafraid to shake up the original's formula bodes well. The Bioshock name alone won't guarantee success, but a fresh, inventive take on multiplayer might.

## Dev talk



"Some say it's not natural for Bioshock to have multiplayer, but they don't realise that the original Splicers were designed to have Plasmids. Now you'll face people with the same tools as you, only they'll be using them in ways you hadn't thought of."

**Melissa Miller**  
Senior producer,  
Digital Extremes



❑ Taking down a Daddy requires teamwork from a team that'll turn on you as soon as he's finished.



Preview

## Quick pitch

### Time travel

Move between 1950 and 2010 and use time powers to attack enemies or solve puzzles.

### Ghost story

Time echoes reveal ghostly replays that show events leading up to a time-cracking explosion.

### Creature feature

Creatures from an interdimensional 'null space' mutate enemies to make more powerful monsters.

The Next... Bioshock Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub Activision Dev Raven

# Singularity

△ Let's ○ Do ⊗ The □ Timewarp

**O**ur first few minutes of Singularity are uncomfortable. Not because it looks bad, but because so much of it looks like Bioshock. The way objects you need to interact with light up, for example, while some animations, special effects and arguably the entire design aesthetic all feel familiar. But the real WTF? moment comes when a scientist radios in and his face appears next to little screen *exactly* like Bioshock. Producer Kekoa Lee-Creel insists the comparisons are a "compliment".

## Cold war

You play as Nate Ranko, a pilot who crashes on a Russian island where an

accident has screwed up time and left him ping-ponging between 1950 and 2010. As a result he's forced to fight Spetsnaz and interdimensional mutants while trying to prevent the explosive singularity that started the whole mess. Dependant on era, the industrial location flits between box-fresh newness and overgrown dilapidation depending on the time zone. Those Bioshock influences really pep it up, too, with oversaturated colours and '50s-themed clunky technology.

The most important feature is the Time Manipulation Device (TMD). It's a temporal remote control that enables you to rewind, fast forward and freeze time. So rather than shooting soldiers

you can age them into a dusty skeleton. More creatively, you can return a broken bridge to its working state, or nudge an empty ammo crate through time to when it was full of bullets.

These abilities add an interesting twist to the otherwise typical run and gun action, and there are plenty of uses for the TMD – like destroying cover, collapsing walls and rewinding mutants to their human form. Things will also get more complicated according to Lee-Creel, hinting at the possibility of paradox-style puzzles where you must alter events in one timeline to proceed in another. Which sounds exciting providing no one shoots anyone else's grandfather.





## Dev talk



"Singularity will have full competitive multiplayer - we're working to integrate the time functionality."  
**Kekoa Lee-Creel**  
 Producer, Activision

# Could Be A Contender

## Marvel MMO



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

### The premise

Create a superpowered character and use your abilities to save or terrorise a massive city.

### The reality

It's an online RPG where you quest with friends to level-up, gain new powers and unlock new missions.

### The hook

Set in the Marvel universe, you'll be fighting with characters such as Wolverine, Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four.

### The inspiration

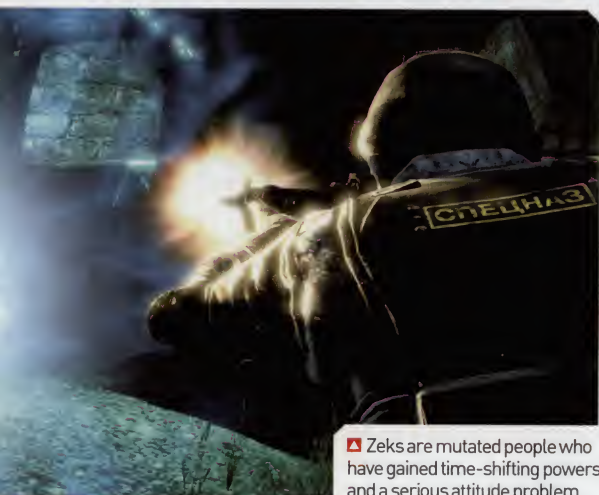
Every Marvel comic ever written. That's 70 years of stories to play with.

### The chances

Developer Gazillion Entertainment has no current track record, so who knows, but it will face competition from Sony's DC Universe.

Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub TBC Dev Gazillion Ent

▲ Time distortion mutates people into The Thing-style monsters which are every stage of human evolution at once.



▲ Zeks are mutated people who have gained time-shifting powers and a serious attitude problem.

## On The Box Judged by their covers



### Operation Flashpoint

A 700-foot genetically manipulated marine swats helicopters out of the sky in slo-mo while shouting "Rawrrr!"  
 Format PS3 ETA Autumn  
 Pub Codemasters



### The Bigs 2

In an attempt to attract girls to baseball, players must now sing show tunes before running. The cover shows Milwaukee Brewers' first baseman Prince Fielder performing Oklahoma after a home run.  
 Format PS3 ETA July Pub Take Two



### The Beatles: Rock Band

It's a racing game where the band run around Liverpool-themed tracks trying to survive fame. Difficulty levels range from Expert (Lennon) to Easy (Ringo).  
 Format PS3 ETA September Pub EA



Preview

## Quick pitch

### Be a spy

Use gadgets like Bond or hone your fighting skills like Bourne.

### Online all the time

Play with and against hundreds of other agents to complete missions.

### Dress for success

Rather than levelling up skills with XP, you improve and change abilities by wearing different outfits.

The Next Big Thing **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** Sony **Dev** Sony Online Entertainment

# The Agency

△ It's ○ World × Of □ Spycraft

**T**he Agency might be the first massively multiplayer game it's okay to get caught playing by your other half in the dead of night.

"What this? No love, no goblins at all. Look, it's got guns and everything."

First and foremost this is a shooter. An FPS with missions, characters and action that takes its cues from the glamour of Bond, the action of Mission: Impossible and the humour of Austin Powers. And instead of picking up loot and magic items like you might in a more traditional RPG, The Agency will give you mad professors to help with

gadgets, or meathead mercenaries to lend you extra firepower in combat.

## Undercover agent

Our mission begins after choosing a faction from either UNITE, the posh debonair types, or ParaGON, the rough-edged mercenaries. Things start gently in a Swiss château, complete with expensive cars parked outside, hedge mazes round the back, elaborate sensor arrays and a cocktail-sipping clientele of high-rolling guests. The perfect milieu for UNITE's agents to use their aliases to slip in unnoticed (ParaGON agents would

have to mix it with the hoi polloi, with their aliases better suited to the kitchen, slipping in among the fleet of waiters). Initially it's all about infiltration – acting naturally to avert suspicion, distracting the guards and staying hidden long enough to reach the contact.

At which point the chaos starts, as a Harrier Jump Jet piloted by a megalomaniac scientist blows a hole in the wall, leading to a frenzied shootout in the car park. Escape was then possible through the hedge maze filled with alarms and laser turrets. And not a Blood Elf in sight.

## Rivals



### Free Realms

(PS3, Sony)  
A family-friendly, fantasy-themed MMO, which links up with a real-life trading card game.



### MAG

(PS3, Sony)  
Forget subtlety, just go in with all guns blazing as you try to win a war with your 127 teammates.



### Uncharted Waters: Cruz del Sur

(PS3, Koei)  
The first PS3 MMO released is based on high-seas adventure. But it's only out in Japan.

## The hook You and your mates create your very own MI6

Join the shadowy world of international espionage by choosing from one of two factions: the swanky UNITE or the rough and ready ParaGON mercenaries. Sometimes you'll be fighting on the same side, occasionally you'll be fighting each other, but you'll always be working to rid the world of evil megalomaniac villains.



This UNITE agent is typically svelte and sexy.



It's a fast-paced cartoon shooter à la 'Splitters.



Spying always takes place in exotic locations.

## Quick pitch

### Lara is out

After 15 years of the Windies legend starring, Codies moves its focus towards England and Oz.

### Realism is in

Forget the arcadey PS2 games, this is a sim that aims to mimic real batting, bowling and fielding.

### Tweak your balls

Licenses aren't plentiful, but an edit mode enables you to customise, just like old-school PES.

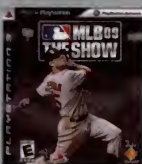
**Can't wait?**  
Play these

PlayStation 2



**Cricket 07**  
(PS2, EA)

The best recreation going of our summer sport still plays well on backwards-compatible PS3s.



**MLB 09: The Show**  
(PS3, Sony)

Alright, it ain't cricket. But the Ashes dev team admit it's a source of inspiration. Plus, it's bloody brilliant.



Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** July **Pub** Codemasters **Dev** Transmission Games

# Ashes Cricket 2009

Ⓐ Fours Ⓑ Sixes ✕ Tiny ◻ Urn

**M**y first experience of Ashes Cricket 2009 is terrifying. The opposing team walk out, and they all have Ricky Ponting's face. Just contemplate the horror of that for a second. Exactly.

The good news is the Ponting clones were placeholders, and mercifully there will only be one version of the Aussie skipper in the final game. As well as featuring licenses for the ECB, MCC, and Cricket Australia, we're promised it'll host a comprehensive

edit mode akin to that found in PES's PS2 heyday, enabling you to fix any unlicensed teams or players. (Or just wait for the hardcore kids to do it, then download the file from the net.)

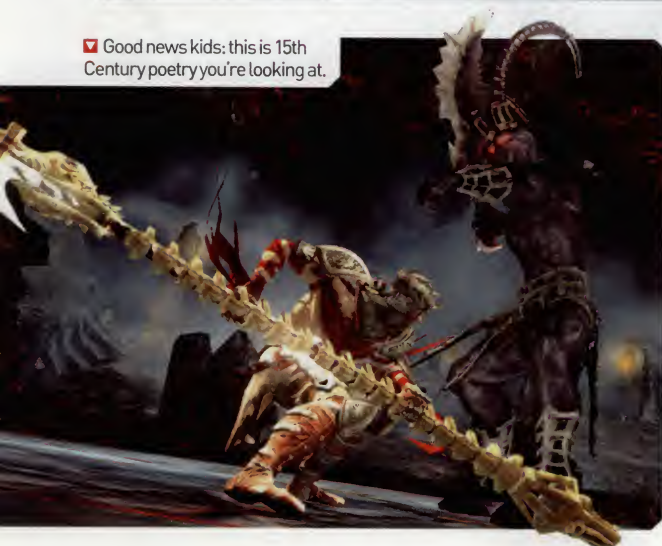
## Willow waving

On the pitch Ashes is noticeably less arcadey than its predecessor, Brian Lara 2007. Shot selection is split between defend, attack and loft, and you can toggle from front to back foot, with the left stick controlling direction.

Bowling is controlled using an MLB 09: The Show-style meter (it's one of the key influences on Ashes) which you need to stop at the correct point to send down an accurate delivery.

Our only annoyance is that you have to unlock stadiums as you play rather than have them all available at the outset. Otherwise, we're really looking forward to winning the urn on PS3. Because, let's face it, there's naff all hope of Freddie and friends actually doing it for real.

✓ Good news kids: this is 15th Century poetry you're looking at.



The Next... God Of War **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** EA **Dev** Visceral Games

# Dante's Inferno

Ⓐ Pain Ⓑ Suffering ✕ Slightly ◻ Familiar

**Y**ou've got to admire EA's chutzpah. Dante's Inferno doesn't just borrow from God Of War, it roots around in Kratos' G-string drawer. Health orbs pour from slaughtered enemies, chests can be prised open to release power-ups and messy button-matching finishing moves brutalise big monsters once you've softened them up. Even the main weapon, Death's scythe, has the same sweeping, arcing attacks as the Blades Of Athena.

But if you're going to copy you might as well copy from the best, and this plays all the better for its choice of source material. Despite the shamefaced cribbing it's immediate and messy fun. It's also pretty evil. No, *really* despicable. Doors are living demons that must be gutted to open and twitchy little blade-armed babies can be spiked and picked up like squirming sausages on a stick. C'mon then Kratos. The gore war starts here.



Preview



VERSE 1  
08906

Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub Sega Dev Platinum Games

# Bayonetta

△ Posh ○ Totty × Hands □ On

The first big surprise comes when Bayonetta opens her mouth and out pops a plummy English accent. Coupled with her constant innuendoes – “Don’t you want to *play* with me?” she drawls to an octopus-armed boss the size of the London Eye – the effect is oddly reminiscent of Liz Hurley’s in Austin Powers. I ask director Hideki Kamiya if he had her in mind when designing the character. “No, but if you know any girls like that I’d like their numbers,” he laughs. Ever the charmer, Kamiya is wearing a Union Jack beanie for our playtest. He says his ambition for Bayonetta, for all his games in fact, is simply to give players what they want.

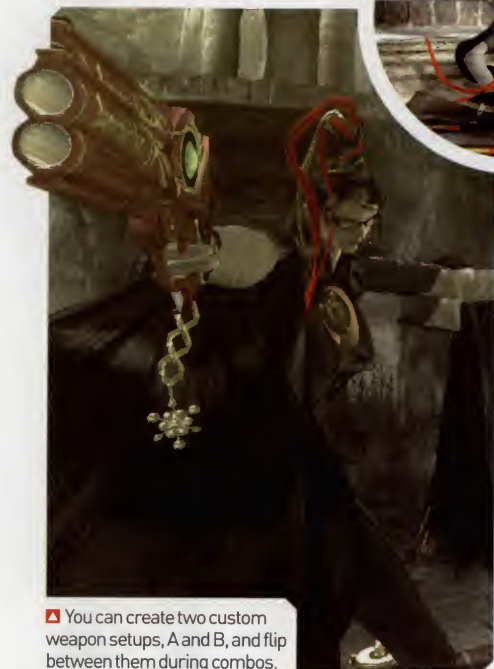
What they want in this case being a buttock-baring witch who fights using a combination of blades, pistols and hair. Yes, hair. It transmogrifies into enormous magical fists, a demon dog, and a variety of torture devices. And because it’s also used for her clothing,

these moves will temporarily denude our heroine. That Bayonetta plays a *lot* like Devil May Cry is no surprise. Kamiya-san directed the first game in that series, and has plenty of love for Dante. So does he think Bayonetta will be a cooler character? “They’re equally appealing but in a different way,” he replies diplomatically, before noting, “Dante from the first DMC is a very cool character.” Does that mean he thinks DMC has gone downhill since his time in charge? “No comment!”

## Sink or swim

He might not want to say it, but we can: Bayonetta *is* going to be cooler, and for two reasons. One, it captures the sheer lunacy of the original DMC. None of it makes any sense. Not the hyperactive moves, not the freaky enemy design, not the fact you can turn into animals (like a panther to zip between distant enemies during combos, or a butterfly to glide after a

double jump) not the vaguely European setting collapsing around your ears, and certainly not the plot. But all of it looks amazing, in an explosion in a manga shop kind of way. And two, the game feels super-responsive. There’s no lag between your button inputs and the chaos exploding onscreen. It feels a bit like a classic arcade shoot-’em-up, constantly bombarding you with flashier effects and bigger bosses. Maybe all the weirdness will prove too Japanese for UK tastes, but there isn’t any other obvious reason why you *wouldn’t* want to play with Bayonetta.



❑ You can create two custom weapon setups, A and B, and flip between them during combos.



❑ Enemy design is bizarre even by Japanese standards.



❑ Sarah Palin and Bayonetta, separated at birth?



❑ The default difficulty is sadistic, there's also an 'easy automatic' mode that simplifies all the moves.

## Dev talk



"We have no problem at all with the game being very, very difficult. We are making it for action game fans."  
**Hideki Kamiya**  
 Director,  
 Platinum Games

# Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

**Max Belanger**  
 Producer, Radical Entertainment

## Assassin's Creed II



I'm particularly interested in open-world titles such as Assassin's Creed. Sequels don't always live up to their predecessor, but in this case I have a feeling the team behind it won't disappoint gamers. God I hope I'm right.

## Bioshock 2

I loved the last one. I loved the fact that visually it was stunning. The original plot and even the first-person mechanics – they were actually very tight and easy to master. Didn't like the ending, though, so change that.



## inFamous



It's a direct competitor, yes, but from what I've seen, it's slightly different from the Prototype experience. I feel less strongly about it than our project but I'm giving them a chance to blow me away.



Preview



❑ Solomon Grundy, the latest villain to be announced, is a zombie who works the whole 'smash!' aspect of super evil.

Original Concept **Format** PS3 **ETA** 2010 **Pub** Sony **Dev** Sony Online Austin

# DC Universe Online

048

Ⓐ Heroes Ⓞ Villains ⊗ Massively ◻ Multiplayer

**T**he thing about saving the world is that it can feel a lot like hard work. Or at least it can on your own, which is why the massively multiplayer world in DC Universe is built around teamwork. Guild-style groups of do-gooders can join forces to form Leagues while villains gather to make Legions. "These groups are large communities that share resources and come together to tackle crises," says creative director Jens Andersen. So just like when Superman and Batman join forces to defeat a shared enemy, it's always better to work together.

## Power play

You won't *actually* get to be Batman or Superman of course. Iconic heroes only appear as non-playable characters, providing missions and

helping with quests. Instead you use a character creation system to make your own Batbloke or Super-Dave instead. Powers can be chosen from areas such as strength, speed, flight, magic and so on. You then choose good or evil, which means either trying to save or destroy key DC locations like Metropolis or Gotham.

Typical missions include foiling a bank robbery, stealing secret government tech or dealing with an alien invasion. "Players obtain cases as they play," explains Andersen, "Sometimes players uncover a lead on patrol, or from a Justice League member. You don't have to be in any particular place or talk to anyone – the content comes to you." Success boosts your Threat rating. "When your Threat is high you attract certain characters in the game. It also opens you up to

encounters with other players.

Once you've got your spandex posse together it's time to talk tactics. "Combining powers is really cool," Andersen explains. "If you put down an electrical field and I roll a giant boulder through it, the boulder picks up a charge. Plus, players can choose different roles to fight as a group more effectively." And with both PS3 and PC gamers playing together there will be no end of super-people to join forces with. Andersen says, "It was important to make sure PC and PS3 players could play with each other without any competitive edge going to either."

Getting the two formats to co-exist harmoniously will be an impressive achievement in itself. We can't help but predict that a massive PC vs PS3 prison gang-style riot will erupt the second the servers go live next year.

## Quick pitch Create a hero

Mix up a range of costumes, accessories and powers to make any character you can think of.

## Super-duper team

Completing a mission means working together with other players to tactically combine powers.

## Meet the stars

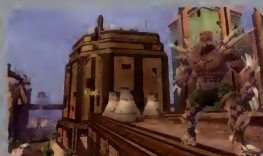
Get help and missions from the stars of DC comics. Both good and bad.

## Dev talk



"Our concept is 'Rule or Save the world'. We've got plans for events – like our first public demo, in which Brainiac was invading Metropolis – that pop up all over the globe."  
**Jens Andersen**  
Creative director,  
DC Universe Online

## Dirty job Not everyone wants to save the world



Play as a villain and characters like Solomon Grundy (torn suit) or Doomsday (spiky) will ask you to help wreak havoc. Superman might pound you a bit, but the dental plan's great.



✓ New tackling tech sees up to nine players battle for the ball.

Classic Series **Format** PS3 **ETA** 14 August **Pub** EA **Dev** EA Tiburon

## Madden NFL 10

⊕ Nine ⊙ Man ⊗ Pile □ Ons

While Madden NFL 09 heralded a return to form of sorts for EA's gridiron series, it still wasn't quite there in terms of realism. So this time out there's a clear focus on making every tiny event feel unscripted and organic, from how cornerbacks adjust to receivers on-the-fly, to offensive linemen actively trying to form a 'pocket' for the quarterback rather than constantly being sucked towards the nearest defender. These may appear to be minor tweaks, but it's the tiny details that have put MLB 09: The Show and NHL 09 ahead of their sporting contemporaries, so it's good to see Madden following suit. We especially



love the new injury system, where keeping a guy on the field with a minor knock risks something more serious – like a heavy knee sprain leading to a torn ACL.

### Huge tackle

Another big add is procedural tackling. When the ball carrier is grabbed by a defender, this mechanic enables up to seven other men to help bring him down – or push him towards the end

zone. This new tech also means QBs can now break free of sack animations. It looks exceptional, and should be a huge step forward in EA's eternal quest to simulate the sport.



✓ D-backs no longer have the 'eyes in back of head' ability prominent in 09.

## Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

### ▲ More Metal Gear

Bless Hideo Kojima, always teasing that it might be the end of the series. Konami would no more stop making MGS than Sky would stop showing football.

### ▲ Not-so-secret game

Leaked, year-old footage wasn't the ideal way to debut the new Team Ico game. But still: *what a game.*

### ▲ Nier or there

Square Enix is doing a Devil May Cry-style demon-slaying actioner called Nier. No one tell Dante's Inferno...

### ▼ Release the bat!

It isn't often a game gets delayed because it's surprisingly good, but that does seem to be the case with Batman: Arkham Asylum. Want it now.

### ▼ Au revoir, Atari

The European office of Atari (née Infogrames) has now been fully ingested by Namco Bandai.

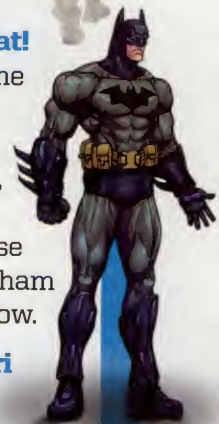
### ▼ Exclusive DLC

With third-party single-format games increasingly rare, fanboy fury is now increasingly being directed at timed DLC lockout deals. Way to make the console war even duller, guys.

### Dev talk



"I want this game to look like football, not a football videogame."  
**Ian Cummings**  
Lead designer,  
Madden NFL 10





Preview

## Blur

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub Activision

This is being billed as Mario Kart for big boys, with electro power-ups used to gain an edge during races. Speed boosts are obvious, but more exotic is the beam that batters other cars off the road. The race structure is based around social networking, with rival racers messaging you and events themed on different styles of driving. Throw in 20-player online and you've got the freshest car game in a while.



▲ "Darling, let's never let Cole from inFamous drive the kids to school again."

# The latest on...

New shots, new games, new info



## Marvel vs Capcom 2

Format PSN ETA Summer Pub Capcom

HD makeover for this classic fighter starring 56 beautifully drawn fighters. Marvel gets Iron Man and Captain America, Capcom's crew includes Mega Man, Ryu and – yes! – Resi's Jill Valentine.



## Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10

Format PS3 ETA 2 July Pub EA

Finally packing the online tournaments we've wanted for years, in three flavours: daily, weekly, or Play The Pros, where you compete against real-life golfers' scores during actual pro events.



## F1 2009

Format PSP ETA Autumn Pub Codemasters

Codies' first crack at F1 arrives on PSP ahead of a PS3 release in 2010. Excitingly it uses the same tech as Race Driver Grid, and the team hopes to have 24-way multiplayer in the PS3 version.



## Resonance Of Fate

Format PS3 ETA Spring 2010 Pub Sega

New RPG from Star Ocean/Valkyrie Profile developer Tri-Ace, which promises to focus on dramatic action in what's described as a 'highly-mechanised world'. Expect guitars, angst.



## Dead Rising 2

Format PS3 ETA March 2010 Pub Capcom

Will have multiplayer, says Capcom legend Keiji Inafune: "We're at a point that you need to have some form of multiplayer component in a game. Single-player alone is not going to cut it." Get. In.



## Brutal Legend

Format PS3 ETA October Pub EA

Tim Schafer's rock adventure hinges on it being funny. Luckily, it is, thanks to great animation and comedy timing that brings out the best in both the script and Jack Black's performance.



### MX vs ATV Reflex

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub THQ

Has us intrigued because of its new controls. The right stick moves your driver while the left stick controls the vehicle, giving you total control over momentum and enabling Pure-style acrobatics.



### NHL 10

Format PS3 ETA September Pub EA

The latest edition in EA's brilliant hockey series adds tussling along the boards (yes!) and, in a shameless piece of fan service, first-person fighting. What's Canadian for 'bang him out'?



### Pixeljunk 1-4

Format PSN ETA Sony Pub Q-Games

Yes, that's a working title. This time you chart a tiny craft through caverns, rescuing people while avoiding aliens and streams of lava. Expect it to be super kitsch and disgusting moreish.



### The King Of Fighters XII

Format PS3 ETA 16 July Pub Ignition

Steadfastly riding SFIV's coat-tails, KOF's PS3 debut packs 26 playable characters into its traditional three-on-three fighting system. But it's still in 2D and, inevitably, still no Street Fighter.



### Katamari Forever

Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub Namco Bandai

Another adorably nonsensical effort from Keita Takahashi, in which you roll objects like sushi, cats, people, ships and continents into a massive ball of AMAZING. We're so not over this yet.



### Fallout 3

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Bethesda

Sorry Xbots. The Operation Anchorage DLC hits PSN shortly, with The Pitt and Broken Steel following in four to six weeks. Point Lookout and Mothership Zeta, both new, are also on the way.



### Need For Speed Shift

Format PS3 ETA Winter Pub EA

In a clear break with the series' wideboy element, this is serious racing and looks stunning. The in-car view is as authentic as it gets, while woozy distort-o-cam crashes only add to the realism.



### Front Mission Evolved

Format PS3 ETA 2010 Pub Square Enix

The long-running mech series gets rebooted, with more action and less RPG, although you can still upgrade your bots with new gear as you go. The 'bots are called Wanzer by the way. Get used to it.

## Also on the way...

More hard game fact crammed in at the last possible minute

Team Ninja has confirmed that **Ninja Gaiden III** is on the way. "Gamers are looking for the next chapter. We feel that we're in a position of being able to make that call," says new studio head Yosuke Hayashi. Okay gang, who wants more **Wheelman**?! Oh. Right. Well anyway, Paramount is redoubling efforts to get a movie spin-off of the game made, with Vin Diesel reprising his role of Milo Burik. Madness. As is the spelling of **Thi4f**, the next instalment in the ace steampunk fantasy series, last seen on Xbox in 2004 - "We're in the early development stages, but this is a very exciting, incredibly ambitious project," says Eidos Montreal general manager Stephane D'Astous. Also inbound is a fifth **Yakuza** from Sega and a **Mr T** game by Zootfly, while Ubisoft has patented the name **Driver: The Recruit**. Sony Ericsson president Hideki Komiyama says that a **PlayStation mobile** could still happen, reasoning that "if we do not adapt to this new technology or new market environment, we're going to lose". Sony is also looking to expand **PSN** to other devices, according to CEO Howard Stringer. "We will be expanding the PlayStation Network to hardware other than the PS3, because the number of PS3 units sold puts a limit on the scale of the network," he explains. Trash Panic on iPhone please, Howie.

### CANADA

1 2 3  
Vancouver

5 6  
Seattle

4  
Montreal

28 29  
Boston

New York

26  
Chicago

27  
Washington, DC

22 23 24  
Salt Lake City

7 8 9 10  
San Francisco

11 12 13 14 15  
16 17 18 19 20  
Los Angeles

21  
San Diego

25  
Dallas

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### CANADA

##### West Coast

**1 EA Canada**  
Owner Electronic Arts  
Location Burnaby  
Games produced FIFA series, NBA Live series, NHL series

**2 Radical Entertainment**  
Owner Activision  
Location Vancouver  
Games produced Prototype (in development), Hulk, The Simpsons: Hit & Run, The Simpsons: Road Rage

**3 Rockstar Vancouver**  
Owner Rockstar  
Location Vancouver  
Games produced Bully, Max Payne 3 (in development)

##### East Coast

**4 Ubisoft Montreal**  
Owner Ubisoft  
Location Montreal  
Games produced Assassin's Creed, Prince Of Persia series, Rainbow Six series, Splinter Cell series, Far Cry 2

# PlayStation planet

Planning on becoming a superstar developer? Pick your cubicle...

#### UNITED STATES

##### West Coast

**9 Sucker Punch Productions**  
Owner Independent  
Location Bellevue, Washington  
Games produced Sly Cooper series, inFamous

**6 Zipper Interactive**  
Owner Sony  
Location Redmond, Washington  
Games produced SOCOM series, MAG (in development)

**7 2K Marin**  
Owner Take Two Interactive  
Location Novato, California  
Games produced Bioshock (PS3), Bioshock 2

**8 LucasArts**  
Owner LucasFilm  
Location San Francisco, California  
Games produced Star Wars series, Fracture

**5 EA Redwood Shores**  
Owner Electronic Arts  
Location Redwood City, California  
Games produced The Simpsons, The Godfather series, Dead Space

##### Crystal Dynamics

Owner Eidos  
Location Redwood City, California  
Games produced Tomb Raider series, Legacy Of Kain series

##### Neversoft

Owner Activision  
Location Woodland Hills, California  
Games produced Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series, Guitar Hero III onwards

##### Infinity Ward

Owner Activision  
Location Encino, California  
Games produced Call Of Duty 1, Call Of Duty 2, Modern Warfare

##### Insomniac Games

Owner Independent  
Location Burbank, California  
Games produced Ratchet & Clank series, Resistance series, Spyro The Dragon

##### Pandemic

Owner Electronic Arts  
Location Los Angeles, California  
Games produced Mercenaries series, Destroy All Humans 1 and 2, Star Wars: Battlefront I and II, The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest, The Saboteur (in development)

##### ThatGameCompany

Owner Independent  
Location Los Angeles, California  
Games produced Cloud, Flow, Flower

##### Naughty Dog

Owner Sony  
Location Santa Monica, California  
Games produced Jak & Daxter series, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

##### SCE Studio

Owner Sony  
Location Santa Monica, California  
Games produced God Of War series

##### EA Los Angeles

Owner Electronic Arts  
Location Santa Monica, California  
Games produced Medal Of Honor series, Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3

##### Treyarch

Owner Activision  
Location Santa Monica, California  
Games produced Call Of Duty 3 and World At War, Quantum Of Solace, Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows

##### Obsidian Entertainment

Owner Independent  
Location Irvine, California  
Games produced Neverwinter Nights 2, Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic II, Aliens RPG, Alpha Protocol

##### SCE San Diego

Owner Sony  
Location San Diego, California  
Games produced MLB: The Show, High Velocity Bowling

##### Centre

**28 Incognito Entertainment**  
Owner Independent  
Location Salt Lake City, Utah  
Games produced Twisted Metal series, Warhawk, Calling All Cars

##### Lighthouse Interactive

Owner Independent  
Location Salt Lake City, Utah  
Games produced First title in development

##### Eat Sleep Play

Owner Independent  
Location Salt Lake City, Utah  
Games produced Rumoured to be making new Twisted Metal

##### Gearbox Software

Owner Independent  
Location Plano, Texas  
Games produced Brothers In Arms series, Borderlands, Aliens: Colonial Marines (currently in development)

##### Raven Software

Owner Activision  
Location Middleton, Wisconsin  
Games produced Hexen series, Heretic series, X-Men Legends, Wolfenstein, Singularity, X-Men Origins Wolverine

##### Bethesda Softworks

Owner ZeniMax Media  
Location Rockville, Maryland  
Games produced Fallout 3, The Elder Scrolls series

##### 2K Boston

Owner/publisher Take Two Interactive  
Location Boston, Massachusetts  
Games produced Bioshock (X360/PC)

##### Harmonix

Owner MTV Networks  
Location Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Games produced Frequency, Amplitude, Guitar Hero, Rock Band series

### EUROPE

#### SWEDEN

- 41 Avalanche Studios**  
Owner Independent  
Location Stockholm  
Games produced Just Cause, Just Cause 2 (in development).

#### 42 DICE

Owner Electronic Arts  
Location Stockholm  
Games produced Battlefield series, Mirror's Edge

#### 43 Grin

Owner Independent  
Location Stockholm  
Games produced Bionic Commando Rearmed, Wanted: Weapons Of Fate, Terminator Salvation

#### 44 Starbreeze Studios

Owner Independent  
Location Uppsala  
Games produced The Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena, The Darkness

#### DENMARK

##### 45 IO Interactive

Owner Eidos  
Location Copenhagen  
Games produced Hitman series, Kane & Lynch, Mini Ninjas (in development)

#### HOLLAND

**46 Guerrilla**  
Owner Sony  
Location Amsterdam  
Games produced Killzone series

#### POLAND

**47 Studio CD Projekt**  
Owner Independent  
Location Warsaw  
Games produced The Witcher (in development)

#### FRANCE

##### 48 Quantic Dream

Owner Independent  
Location Paris  
Games produced Heavy Rain (in development), Omikron: Nomad Soul, Fahrenheit

##### 49 Ubisoft Paris

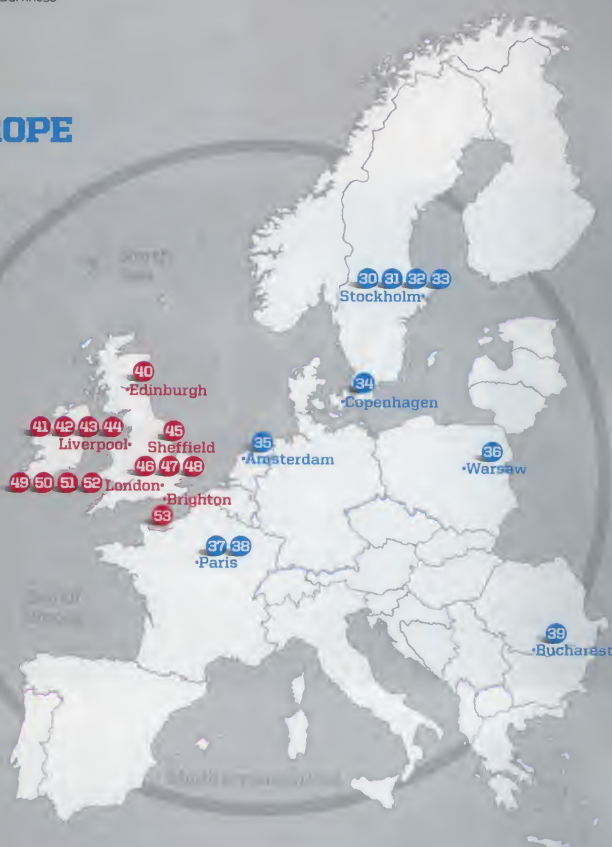
Owner Ubisoft  
Location Paris  
Games produced Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2, XIII, Peter Jackson's King Kong (PS2 and PSP)

#### ROMANIA

##### 50 Ubisoft Romania

Owner Ubisoft  
Location Bucharest  
Games produced Blazing Angels series, HAWX

### EUROPE



### UK

- 40 Rockstar North**  
Owner Rockstar Games  
Location Edinburgh  
Games produced GTA series

#### 41 Bizarre Creations

Owner Activision  
Location Liverpool  
Games produced The Club, Blur (in development)

#### 42 SCE Studio Liverpool

Owner Sony  
Location Liverpool  
Games produced Wipeout series, F1: Championship Edition

#### 43 Evolution Studios

Owner Sony  
Location Runcorn, Cheshire  
Games produced WRC series, Motorsport series

#### 44 Traveller's Tales

Owner/publisher Warner Brothers Entertainment Inc  
Location Knutsford, Cheshire  
Games produced Lego Star Wars series, Lego Batman, Lego Indiana Jones

#### 45 Sumo Digital

Owner Independent  
Location Sheffield  
Games produced Super Rub 'a' Dub, GTI Club +, Virtua Tennis 3, Outrun Online Arcade

#### 46 Codemasters

Owner Codemasters  
Location Warwickshire  
Games produced Colin McRae Rally series, Race Driver Grid, Fuel, Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising, F1

#### 47 Ninja Theory Ltd

Owner Independent  
Location Cambridge  
Games produced Heavenly Sword

#### 48 SCE Studio Cambridge

Owner Sony  
Location Cambridge  
Games produced MediEvil, PlayTV, PlayStation Home

#### 49 Rocksteady Studios

Owner Independent  
Location Highgate, London  
Games produced Urban Chaos: Riot Response, Batman Arkham Asylum

#### 50 SCE Studio London

Owner Sony  
Location London  
Games produced The Getaway, SingStar series, EyeToy series, EyePet

#### 51 Criterion Games

Owner Electronic Arts  
Location Guildford  
Games produced Black, Burnout series

#### 52 Media Molecule

Owner Independent  
Location Guildford  
Games produced LittleBigPlanet

#### 53 Relentless Software

Owner Independent  
Location Brighton  
Games produced Buzz series

### JAPAN

#### Tokyo

- 54 Polyphony Digital**  
Owner Sony  
Location Tokyo  
Games produced Gran Turismo series

#### 55 SCE Studio Japan

Owner Sony  
Location Tokyo  
Games produced Ape Escape series, Echochrome, Locoroco, Siren: Blood Curse

#### 56 Team Ico

Owner Sony  
Location Tokyo  
Games produced Ico, Shadow Of The Colossus, unnamed PS3 project in development

#### 57 Konami

Owner Konami Corporation  
Location Minato, Tokyo  
Games produced Silent Hill series, PES series

#### 58 Kojima Productions

Owner Konami Corporation  
Location Roppongi, Tokyo  
Games produced Metal Gear Solid series

#### 59 Namco Bandai Games

Owner Namco Bandai Holdings  
Location Tokyo  
Games produced Ridge Racer 7, Ace Combat series, Soulcalibur III and IV, Tekken 5 and 6, Noby Noby Boy

#### 60 Square Enix Co

Owner Square Enix Holdings  
Location Shibuya, Tokyo  
Games produced Final Fantasy series, Dragon Quest series, Kingdom Hearts series

#### Osaka

#### 61 Platinum Games Inc

Owner Independent  
Location Osaka  
Games produced Bayonetta

#### 62 Yuke's Japan

Owner Independent  
Location Osaka  
Games produced WWE Smackdown series, UFC 2009 Undisputed, WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania

#### 63 Capcom Japan

Owner Capcom  
Location Osaka  
Games produced Resident Evil series, Devil May Cry series, Onimusha series, Street Fighter series

### JAPAN



### CHINA



#### 64 Ubisoft Shanghai

Owner Ubisoft  
Location Shanghai  
Games produced Beowulf, Endwar

#### 65 Eidos Shanghai

Owner Eidos  
Location Shanghai  
Games produced None (Outsourced development)

### AUSTRALIA



#### 66 The Creative Assembly

Owner The Creative Assembly  
Location Fortitude Valley  
Games produced Viking, Spartan: Total Warrior

#### 67 2K Australia

Owner Take Two Interactive  
Location Braddon  
Games produced Bioshock

#### 68 Transmission Games

Owner Independent  
Location Melbourne  
Games produced Heroes Over Europe (in development)

# So you've made the best game of all time...\*



## What next?

The original got rave reviews and sold 13 million copies. Now developer Infinity Ward reveals how it plans to make **Modern Warfare 2** even better

\*Source: Game UK store 2008 customer poll.

**feature**  
Modern Warfare 2





“Go to Plan B” crackles across the radio. Chaos is instant and absolute as snow-covered buildings explode into flames. Bewildered soldiers are gunned down in a few seconds of syrupy slo-mo. All hell breaks loose. Planes explode on the runway, troops attack from all sides and we break into a running shootout across a runway. So far we couldn't have hoped for more from Modern Warfare 2. Then we spot the snowmobiles...

“This is a true

sequel to COD4:

Modern Warfare, and

“What we did with the last game was give you that thrill ride,” explains Vince Zampella, Infinity Ward's studio head, “but it was balanced with peaks and valleys so the big moments stuck out more.” That's why, minutes earlier, we were stealthily creeping through a blizzard, thousands of feet up a mountain, surrounded by nothing but snow, rock and blissfully aware of the carnage to come. We'd climbed a sheer wall using ice axes, jumped a chasm – nearly falling to our deaths in the process – and used gun-mounted heartbeat monitors (exactly like Aliens' motion trackers) to hunt and eliminate guards who were little more than shapes in the blinding snow.

The big surprise in all this had been our cigar-smoking companion, his face initially hidden by a parka hood. Immediately we thought of Captain Price – the brusque SAS leader who'd been left for dead in COD4's cliffhanger ending. Ever since, Infinity Ward has refused to comment on his fate. The figure turns to our character, a member of Taskforce 141, and announces coarsely, “Break's over Roach, lets go.” It's Captain... *MacTavish* – Price's protégé ‘Soap’, one of the characters you played as in the previous game. Turning to Zampella we ask, “What about Price?” Shrugging, he infuriatingly answers “I've heard of him” then looks back to the screen.

Soap lives up to his mentor's legacy though. The airfield approach sees us taking down patrolling soldiers in



❑ The prize for finding the soldier in this tumbledown South American shanty town? You get to live... a bit longer.



PS  
057

### it's carrying on that story line."

**ROBERT BOWLING**  
Community manager



unison, each pair dropped on the count of three with a burst of suppressed gunfire. Reaching the base we split and with MacTavish providing sniper support we move silently through the compound. It's too easy. The snow renders us invisible as the 'phut!' of our shots cuts down one tango after another. After planting a C4 charge on a fuel dump we meet back with Soap. "Took the scenic route, did you?" he jokes as we move inside. That's when it all goes FUBAR. While we're checking the computers, Soap gets captured. "Go to plan B" crackles across the radio.

Which brings us to our desperate rescue and escape, in the thick of exploding planes and angry soldiers. As we fight our way to freedom, attack comes from every direction, Soap yelling orders as we squeeze off shots to clear a path. So far the lethal guns, atmosphere and barrelling momentum are everything we'd expect from the series. But then snowmobiles start zooming over a hill...

### Downhill race

Suddenly, we're surrounded by buzzing motor sledges. With a swing of his axe Soap takes a rider clean off his seat and yells at us to grab the vehicle. Then we're off, driving at high speed across the snow. Around us snowmobiles close in, and whenever they get in front we're able to fire off short, panicky bursts of gunfire that tip them into cartwheeling crashes. At the same time we're dodging ➤

❑ The new riot shields add a tactical element to shootouts by providing portable cover once you've 'borrowed' one.





058

“The Taskforce is basically the elite of

▲ Alert the enemy and you won't just have foot soldiers to worry about.

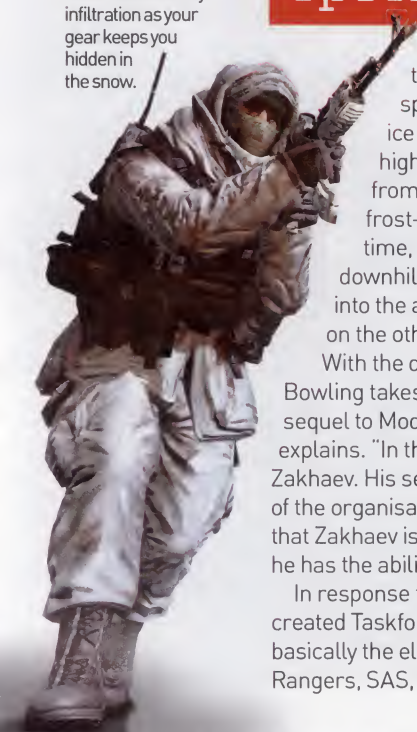
the elite – a hand-picked multinational

special forces group.”

**ROBERT BOWLING**  
Community manager



▼ Blizzard conditions make for a stealthy infiltration as your gear keeps you hidden in the snow.



trees, zipping between them with inches to spare while a pursuing helicopter rakes the ice with bursts of machine gun fire. The high-speed chase is like nothing we've seen from Call Of Duty before and, just when it seems frost-covered certain death is only a matter of time, there's a break in the trees. We speed downhill at full throttle towards a cliff, launching into the air to land safely

on the other side. Democracy one, terrorists nil.

With the danger over, community manager Robert Bowling takes a moment to fill in the story. “This is a true sequel to Modern Warfare, carrying on that story line,” he explains. “In the last game you killed [the terrorist leader] Zakhaev. His second-hand man was Makarov, the mad dog of the organisation who was kept in check by Zakhaev. Now that Zakhaev is no longer part of the equation, he has the ability to take power.”

In response to the threat, Western governments have created Taskforce 141. Bowling explains, “The Taskforce is basically the elite of the elite: hand-picked Delta Force, Rangers, SAS, CIA – a multinational special forces group.”

Zampella adds, “You'll play multiple perspectives. The marines might secure a location, then the CIA will scrub the computers, gather intel.” Bowling continues, “It depends on the operation. You might see a SEAL-heavy mission that requires a US SEAL member to lead. Or you might see something like Rio where Soap leads, but it's all Taskforce 141.”

### Gang war

Our visit to Rio de Janeiro is brief – Infinity Ward is keen not to spoil too much. It starts when Soap and Roach track some shell casings used by the bad guys to a South American arms dealer in a Brazilian slum known as a favela. It's meant to be a low-profile surveillance mission, tailing one of the suspects in a car, but when rival gang members show up a violent shootout erupts. Most of the group are killed, and as the mark runs, a stray bullet takes out our driver. Brains and matter splatter the dashboard and shattered windscreen.

The chase continues on foot but, unlike most gaming warzones, this is a street full of people – screaming and scattering in the confusion. It feels strange because until ►

Captain  
Price is MIA,  
so say  
hello to...




## Captain McTavish

'Soap' MacTavish was one of the playable characters in the first Modern Warfare. (The other, Sergeant Jackson, died in a nuclear explosion.) Now he's been promoted and leads Taskforce 141 as a non-playable character and Price's spiritual successor.

**Custom job** Being Special Forces has its perks. Like choosing nonstandard weapons.

**It's a gas** During an airfield attack you get to plant C4 on some fuel tanks. Guess how *that* ends.



This time,  
you're not  
just riding  
shotgun...

Now *you* get  
to drive!

In the last Modern Warfare there were some vehicles - helicopter transports and an AC-130 gunship, for example - but you were always just a passenger. Now you get to take control: stealing snowmobiles to escape an exploding airfield while dodging trees, evading choppers and blasting enemies.

**In pursuit** You ride solo and can only shoot forwards. Enemies ride in pairs so you need to make your shots count.



**"You are fighting favela militia interspersed with civilians, so you have to choose targets."**

**ROBERT BOWLING**  
Community manager



now Call Of Duty has never included non-combatants. "It fits the story and the level," explains Zampella. "You couldn't have the favela without civilians playing a huge part." As the target heads into a narrow network of alleys Bowling adds, "You're fighting favela militia interspersed with civilians, so you have to choose targets." Onscreen Soap gives the order to shoot but not to kill, so we rake the fleeing man's legs with gunfire to take him down. The level ends with the captured man bound to a chair with Soap preparing to interrogate. "This could take a while" he mutters grimly.

It's not just civilians that stand out in the Brazil level. It's the sheer size of it: a huge sprawling shanty town full of multiple routes and areas. Pointing out some paths Bowling says, "We can play around opening up the level, going different routes and have dynamic AI where if you go one way a guy could pop out of this window but if you go another he'll come out of a door and come running across the rooftop. It adds a lot more dynamics." It's a world away from the more linear, defined battlegrounds seen in the series' previous games. Has Modern Warfare 2 gone open world? Not according to Zampella: "We do it where it fits

and doesn't make the game worse. There isn't any mandate that every level has to be a wide open sandbox. There are certain levels like this where it fits naturally."

### World war tour

The COD engine has had a huge overhaul, enabling the large maps to display intricate levels of detail. The tatty wooden panels and crumbling paths of the favela look incredible. We're also shown some work-in-progress areas, including a stunning desert in Afghanistan – the barren dusty wasteland giving way to a view of mountains and a deep blue river gleaming in the sun. Moving along a dusty road uncovers a huge network of tunnels like the ones found in the opening of Iron Man.

Next up we see a huge forest full of snow-covered fir trees. While it's only a tech demo Bowling gives a glimpse of what to expect, "In this level you're going to be coming up this ridge and there's going to be an APC. It'll try to make chase but get caught up on the ice and start sliding down sideways. It tries to shoot at you and the shells are splintering trees and dropping snow around you."



"I'd rather a shorter, better story than one

that feels artificially longer just to hit a

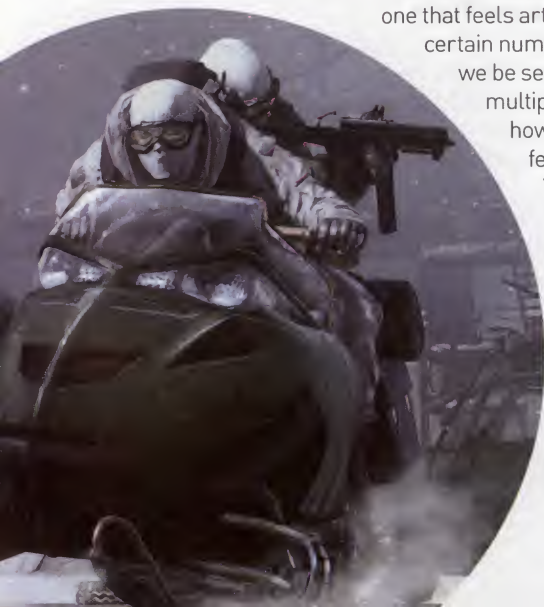
certain number of hours."

**VINCE ZAMPELLA**  
Studio head



❑ Not all targets are soldiers. In Brazil you fight a City Of God-style street militia working for an arms dealer.

❑ Gadgets with faces: the terrorist motor sled strikes a stern expression.



We ask if these larger levels will mean a larger game overall? "It's hard to tell until we get closer to all the gameplay being balanced and finished," responds Zampella. "I think realistically all those levels being bigger will naturally lead to that. We don't go for a specific time. We're building a story and it's based around how we can best tell it. I'd rather have a shorter, better story than one that feels artificially longer just to hit a certain number of hours." Similarly, will we be seeing more substantial multiplayer maps? "We're seeing how that works using community feedback," answers Bowling. "It's a little early to be spoiling those surprises. The number one thing is what's most fun. If it will benefit from being a larger level then we have the tech to do it."


### Helping hand

While we don't get to see any competitive multiplayer we do see some co-op.

Rather than story-based multiplayer, Infinity Ward has opted for separate challenges called Special Ops. Bowling explains, "These are things that are really challenging but might mess with the flow of the game. So let's make it a challenge. Maybe they're levels that get completely removed from the story because they don't fit – you don't want to lose those, they're great levels. So you move pieces here where you can go through and beat a level in a certain amount of time, for example."

In this case it's a level called Gulag which pitches players against waves of Russian riot police carrying shields. The setting is a grim-looking prison shower lit by laser sights from the gallery above. Even with two players it's ruthlessly unforgiving thanks to the riot shields which mean enemies need to be carefully flanked rather than tackled head on. At one point Bowling grabs a shield – it protects him from bullets but takes up both hands meaning he can only attack by bashing people away.

Our time with Infinity Ward ends with a parade of demo rooms used to test various parts of the game. One area is simply filled with photocopiers, fire hydrants and other objects to shoot at. We'd swear blind that among the clutter is a line of London parking meters. Unsurprisingly no one will comment. We also see several enemies. Like ►



Not every  
enemy  
trains hard  
to fight...

Some just  
fight hard

Not all the bad guys are enemy soldiers. In Rio de Janeiro you face what Bowling describes as "Civilians who grew up in the favela, lived there and got recruited into the militia." They're basically a street gang and you're on their turf.



064

"We go for authenticity not realism. We're

making entertainment." **VINCE ZAMPELLA**

Studio head



▲ Funny enough, if you blow up a hidden terrorist airbase people get really upset about it.

a Russian paratrooper wearing red camo, a gas mask and bandoliers filled with shotgun rounds. Most interesting is a large water tank featuring a swimming Navy SEAL in full scuba gear. They've featured heavily in the trailers but there's still no word on whether there will be a playable underwater level. When we ask, no one gives a straight answer, but the incredible detail of the model makes it unlikely it's just a cut-scene prop – you can see everything from the weave of the wetsuit to the pressure valves.

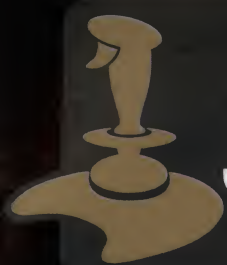
There's also a room filled with auto turrets – tripod-mounted mini-guns with laser sights that mow down advancing waves of enemies. Isn't that pushing the series' usual sense of realism a little far? "We go for authenticity not realism," replies Zampella. "We're not making a sim, we're making entertainment. We want it to look real like

an action movie. You see a guy in an action movie, what he does is a little over the top. It makes for a great movie"

Everything we've seen looks impressive but the big question is whether Infinity Ward thinks it can beat the original Modern Warfare game. "When we first started it was pretty overwhelming" says Bowling. "Everyone was like, 'Okay, how do we come off the back of that?' A lot of the challenge was shaking off that mentality and not focusing on the last game." Vince Zampella sums it up: "Where we are right now, I'm feeling confident that what we've done is really great." And from what we've seen so far, combined with the fact that there are still five whole months until Modern Warfare 2's 10 November release date, it's hard to disagree.

▼ Special Ops adds co-op play to Modern Warfare, enabling you and a friend to play through challenges but not the main story mode – that's single-player only.





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JOYSTICK  
AWARDS**

vote now at  
**goldenjoystick.com**  
and win prizes



# Short list announced

You and your fellow gamers decided who made it on to the short list, now you decide who wins...

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# feature

FIFA 10



PS  
066

How two  
Pro Evo players  
are making

# FIFA 10



the best  
football game  
on PlayStation

We meet the men behind  
FIFA's gameplay revolution



# feature

## FIFA 10

▼ Ronny's still on the cover, despite shocking recent form.



**B**efore they joined EA, the two developers currently in charge of FIFA were hardcore PES men. "I hadn't played FIFA since, I think, Road To World Cup '98" says Gary Paterson, FIFA 10's creative director and the driving force behind the resurgence in the series' gameplay. Producer David Rutter is the same. "I pretty much played Pro Evo exclusively," he admits, remembering the first time he tried Konami's game on PS1. "I was like, 'Oh wow, that's amazing.'"

### Start your engines

This shouldn't be all that surprising, seeing as before the two started working on FIFA, PES was clearly the better game, and had been for years. Not any more. By most accounts, FIFA is at least the gameplay equal of its long-term rival, and even the biggest Konami fanboy has to concede that EA has the technical advantage over PES. When asked about the differences between the PS2 and PS3 versions of PES, Paterson says, "It doesn't seem like new technology at all."

FIFA's comeback, on the other hand, is founded on an entirely new engine. Back in 2005 EA formed a small team to develop a next-gen game from scratch, in readiness for

Xbox 360 and PS3. "They were beginning to throw away the current-gen code," Paterson explains. "Starting again, basically." The debut of this new technology came with the release of FIFA 07 on 360, in September 2006. The new game wasn't the finished article – it was sluggish in places, and needed an overall polish – but it was definitely something new.

By the time the new engine made its first appearance on PS3 with FIFA 08 the following

year, significant all-round improvement had been made. The game was more responsive, and though the general pace was still slow, it was clearly a major progression in a way that Pro Evo's next-gen debut, PES 2008, was not. Another year of refinements confirmed the upward trend was no fluke. FIFA 09 was a proper revelation – fluid, balanced, brilliantly realistic, and the best FIFA game for ages.

What was it about the new engine that

▼ FIFA 10's shooting has been tweaked so it hits the bar less.



**EXCLUSIVE SHOTS**  
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For the new engine the team wanted a system which could take into consideration the sorts of contextual factors which really affect the game, and then use them to work out what would happen in real life. "We have to make a system which *makes* the defender win, by using logical factors like height, weight, strength, stuff like that," says Paterson. The added detail makes designing and building the game far more difficult, but the results are impressive. "Sometimes things happen – like, one in a million games, something'll happen that's really, really cool, because the players are behaving logically [and] it creates logical, realistic outcomes."

### Logical, captain

Physical encounters are just one of the areas which have been opened up and made more complex. Paterson talks at length, and in passionate detail, about all the different factors which go into determining a *single* instance of the ball being kicked, from layers of AI decision making to physical factors, like which way the ball is moving when it's struck, which part of the ball the player makes contact with, whether he's under pressure, and so on. The level of detail is frightening.

## "EA now has the technical advantage over PES."

brought about such dramatic results? "Fundamentally one of the things that changed is, we stay away from any kind of scripting," says Paterson, referring to the use of automated gameplay sequences. On PS2, he says, "if you wanted something to happen you could just code it. You could just say 'shot goes wide', or 'defender wins header'. We don't really have that power any more." He describes how the old system might handle two players challenging for the ball with a scripted animation. "They would put their arms around each other, and you couldn't do anything about it once it started. It looked nice, but the outcomes from it were limited."

### Dev talk

"Realistically, we're a business first and foremost. Ever since I joined EA, I've been a firm believer in the fact that we have to work on the fundamentals every year to keep the experience new, to iron out any problems, to make it feel different."

Gary Paterson, creative director

From the outside it's easy to think that FIFA has improved just because it's got more realistic, but it's not quite that simple. "There is that balance between realism and fun to play," Paterson says. "If you look at our game, the pass completion percentage is much higher than it is in real life, because people want to play a version of football that's Brazil 1978, they don't want to play a version of football that's, I don't know, Cardiff. Well, Cardiff are pretty decent these days, but, like a League Two version of football. They don't want that." In order to strike that balance his team take real life and 'bend it'. "We had a version of the game where the 180° turn was realistically long," he says. "Like, it was the same length as it's supposed to be in real life. But then you make one wrong move with the pad [and] you're out of the game. So we had to reduce these turn speeds so the gamer could recover from them if he made the wrong decision, otherwise it felt unresponsive." Along the same lines Paterson's team also ►►

## How they fixed FIFA

Five reasons for EA's footy resurgence



### Shooting

FIFA uses a complex contextual system that swerves, spins and angles the ball realistically depending on how it's struck by the player, and what position he's standing in at the time.



### AI

The game understands football through team and player-level decision-making, and also allows human players to tinker with team tactics.



### Trapping

Sounds super dry, but responsive and realistic trapping is key to a fluid-feeling game. FIFA 10 refines an already strong system by removing impossible 'warping' animations.



### Jostling

In the past the physical side of the game has been recreated through automated animations, but FIFA now uses weight and strength attributes to decide.



### Momentum

Gameplay maestro Gary Paterson has always refused to put artificial momentum swings into his games. PES, on the other hand, loves to tell a story...

# feature

## FIFA 10



### Dev talk

"Making an authentic football game doesn't necessarily mean realism. It gets to the point where it's no longer a game. There's a kind of easy-to-play, hard-to-master thing that you need to make happen - otherwise it's just not entertainment any more."

David Rutter, producer

reduced the amount of time it takes players to accelerate to top speed (around six seconds in real life, two-and-a-half in the game), and upped the success rate of crosses into the box (a frustrating one out of ten in actual football).

### Summer transfer

Paterson has always had firm ideas about the right and wrong way to make football games. When he worked on the PS2 version of FIFA, he once refused to build a 'momentum' system that would artificially cause the flow of the game to swing from one team or the other at dramatic points in the game (the kind of system many players have suspected existed in FIFA and PES for years). "I shouted loud in the meeting room for half an hour, like, 'No, I'm not doing it! Get someone else to do it if you want,'" he says with a laugh. "I strongly feel that if you make the system logical, then those momentum shifts will just happen. Like, there'll be some times when you're 1-0 up, and you're in a tight match against your buddy. He's attacking, you don't want to take any risks so you press clearance, the ball goes to your buddy again on the halfway line, and he attacks again. These things just happen because we've got you emotionally involved, and you start doing things in the game which are similar to behaviours in real life."



Paterson moved to EA to work on the studio's FIFA-branded management game Total Club Manager, doing the same job as he'd done on LMA. This time, though, he was working with code from the full, live-action version of FIFA, and in getting familiar with how the game was structured he discovered several ways in which he thought it could be improved. He saw that the game was reliant on player attributes and didn't take account of context, and he wrote to the development team and told them so. "These are methodologies and a mind-set and concepts that you can't beat Konami with," he remembers telling them. "And that's how I got my job on FIFA 07."

Rutter joined two years later, just after work had finished on FIFA 08. When EA approached him about taking a role on FIFA 09 he'd already been producing football games for several years, most recently overseeing the urgent rebuilding of Championship Manager, after Eidos had parted ways with developer Sports Interactive. (He remembers the brief - "Ok David, we want you to start a studio to make Championship Manager from scratch" - and that sorting a TV for the studio was one of his biggest headaches. "You wouldn't believe how expensive Sky Sports is to watch in an office!") Years of working at independent studios had made Rutter resentful of EA's big-spending approach to FIFA, and he admits that he "had always had this real disparaging opinion of them" before meeting for an interview. There, he realised that the team had moved past grasping marketing gimmicks - "back-of-the-box ticks" as Rutter dismissively calls them - and



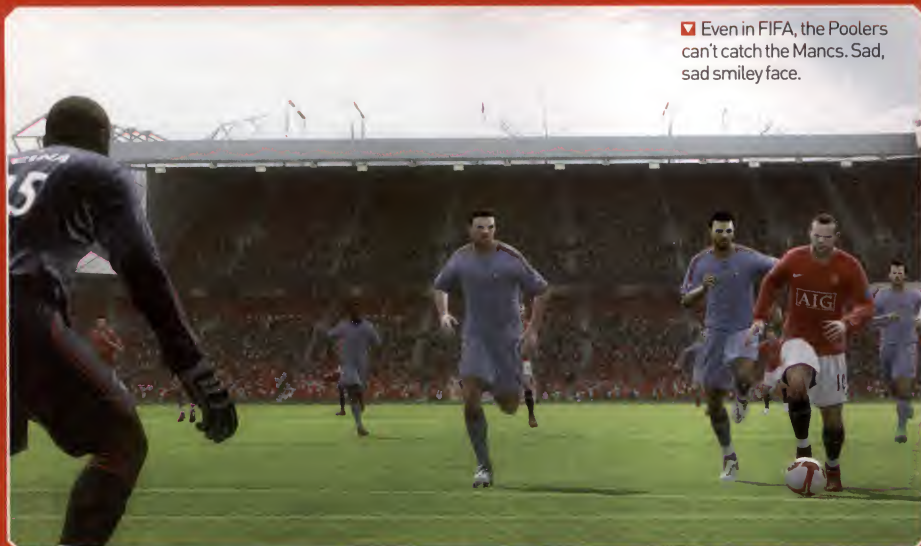
were instead totally focused on improving FIFA's core experience. That was when he realised that he wanted to be involved. "Gary and I have a very similar idea," he says, "which is 'make a damn good game'."

### New season

And last year, that's just what they did. They did it by listening to fans, by concentrating on gameplay, and by polishing and refining - gone are the days of easy-win marketing gimmicks. Feedback was gathered from game testers, the developers, the press and online FIFA communities. "The only reason FIFA 09 was such a big jump in game quality was nothing other than all those people had played the game to death," Rutter insists, "and finally someone properly listened."

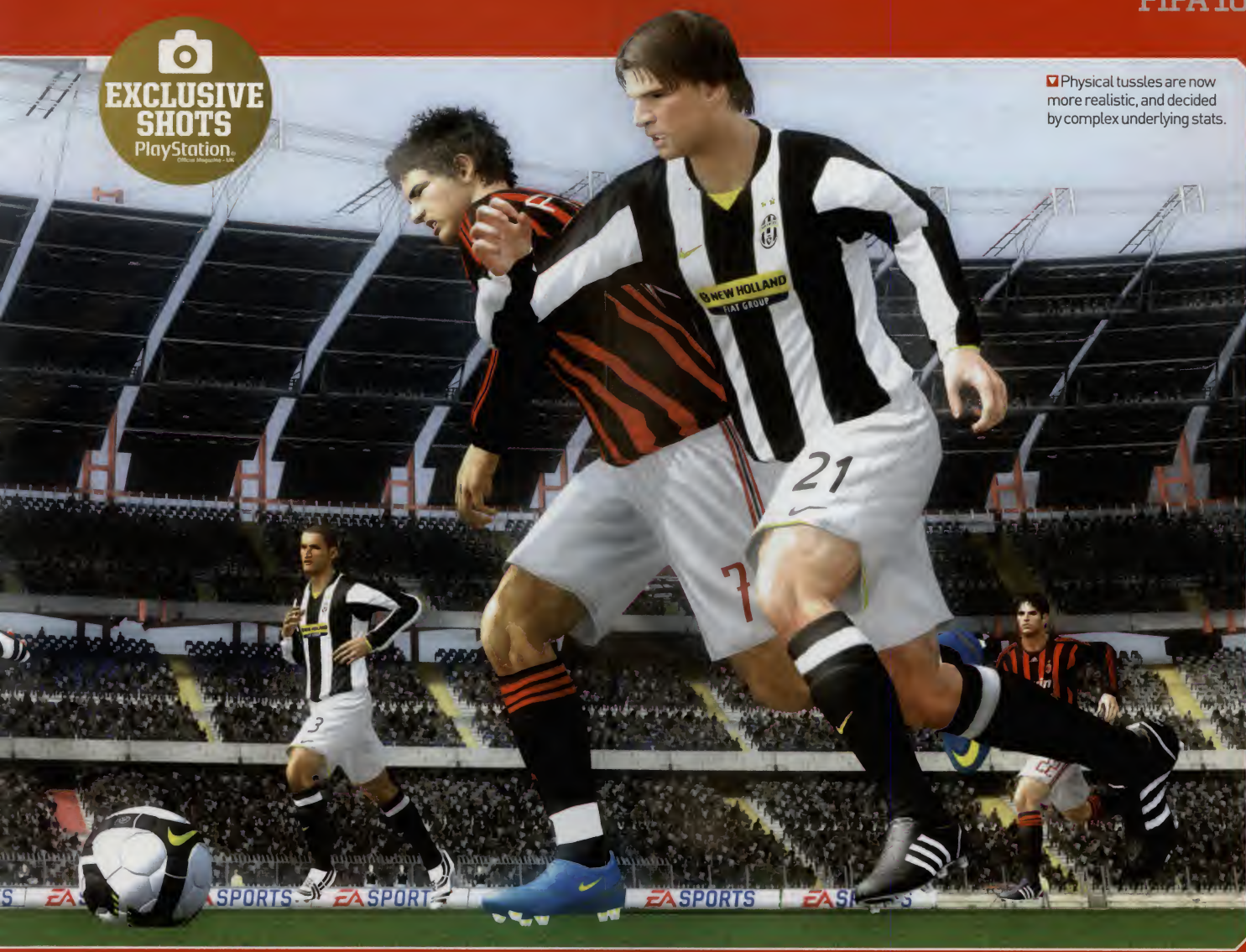
Now they're doing the same again. For FIFA 10, the team calculate that 70% of their manpower is devoted to improving, polishing and expanding the existing code, with 30% spent on new features. For anyone who plays FIFA or PES seriously - or any annually released sports game for that matter - this is good news. The typical experience of these

✔ Even in FIFA, the Poolers can't catch the Manics. Sad, sad smiley face.



**EXCLUSIVE SHOTS**  
PlayStation  
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Physical tussles are now more realistic, and decided by complex underlying stats.



## "Gone are the days of easy-win marketing gimmicks."

players, when they get properly under the skin of whatever they're playing, isn't to wish for extra things to do in the game – 'If only I could do kick-ups' – but to want what they're already playing, and have become an expert at, to be even better and more refined.

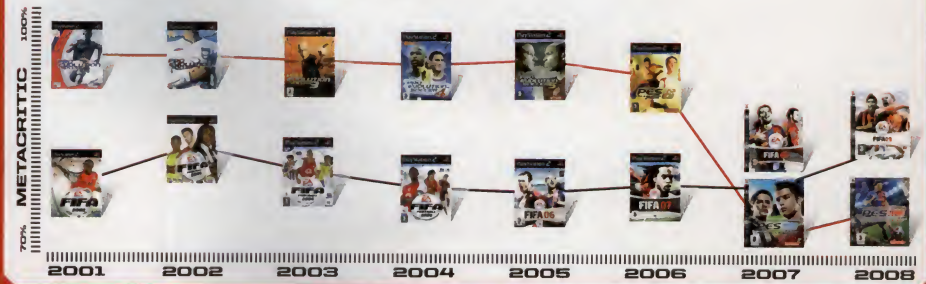
FIFA 10 is built on such refinements. There are dozens of tiny changes, like improved urgency settings which give players a more realistic sense of how they should be acting, meaning your defenders will stroll into position when the ball is upfield rather than buzzing around in FIFA 09's slightly robotic perma-jog. Trapping has also been improved, with an effort to make the AI understand the difference between the 'earliest' and 'easiest' ways to control the ball. It means you'll see fewer mid-air traps, which in real life are very difficult to pull off, and more instances of players taking a step back to let the ball drop

to their feet. The through-balls have been polished and are now easier to slide into space for runners, and long aerial balls are now driven harder and flatter, solving the problem of floaty passes giving defenders too much time to close attackers down.

These may seem like small changes, individually, but collectively they're a testament to FIFA's rigorous new approach. Paterson is responsible for orchestrating this fine-tuning process. "His purity of vision for that side of things is what makes the game so good, trust me," Rutter says of his colleague, and this is made clear to us when, after over an hour into the interview, Paterson is still excitedly describing the difficulties and nuances of capturing the feel of real football by acting out passes and traps.

### PES v FIFA

Metacritic shows how FIFA has turned the tables



Through-ball-shy keepers are being mended with AI to tell them when to rush out.



## “FIFA 10 is a world of angled runs and inside passes.”

But that's not to say that only small changes are being implemented. One thing that stands out as a major step forward is the ability for players to move and dribble around a 360° axis, as opposed to the eight-way paths that both FIFA and PES have traditionally used. It's exactly what Paterson has been describing, opening up a limited element of the game to open-ended possibilities. "I find it very satisfying," Rutter says of the new system. "The fact that you couldn't do that with a player like Cristiano Ronaldo just seemed pretty wrong. We spend a lot of time looking at real football week in week out and seeing if you can do [what real players do] in the game – and if you can't there's something wrong. It's one thing people saying 'we want more kits, boots and balls', but another when you can't actually do something as simple as go, there's two players, I want to run between them..." In our hands-on session with the work in progress version, the new dribble is the most noticeable difference, offering a fluidity which,

in combination with the overhauled through-balls, promises to open the game up to a whole world of angled runs, physical challenges and tidy inside passes.

Aside from the core gameplay, FIFA 10's arena – the impressive player-versus-goalie setup through which you access the menus – is being expanded to a full practice mode. The shooting gallery side will still be there, but you'll also be able to run through set-pieces and even set up full training games. And then there are the things the team are working on but which might not make it into the game – or this year's game, at least. One of these is player-controlled goalkeepers, which Rutter says he is "desperate" to get into the game. "It's really, really hard," he explains. "Hard from the man

making the saves' point of view. [Keepers] sometimes have these lightning reactions and make the most amazing saves. You get to the point where you're like, 'How does the human brain process that quickly enough to make it happen?'"

### Tenth time's the charm

Another thing Rutter would like to be able to put in the game is more realistic offside decisions – not to make them incorrect, necessarily, just less mechanical than the existing, pixel-perfect system. The problem is the game's licensing agreement with FIFA itself. "There are rules," he says, "which the team must adhere to." These include virtual linesmen not making mistakes. "Sometimes there are little battles that we'll feel strongly enough about that we'll try to push, offsides being one of them." He says the team will keep on pushing.

And on top of all this there are plenty of unannounced updates and new ideas that EA isn't ready to show yet. Whatever they may be,





### Dev talk

"When we play PES, the experience feels very similar to PS2. That said, it was an amazing experience on PS2, so I understand why they've continued to build it. I have to think they're working hard behind the scenes to do what they can."

Andrew Wilson, vice president

you can bet good money that there will be some kind of update or expansion of Be A Pro, whether it's properly officiated online leagues or just a longer career mode. For now, we can rest happy knowing that just about all the niggles and hang-ups we had with last year's gameplay are being actively addressed, and that neither Paterson or Rutter are relaxing, despite what they've achieved so far. "Obviously we're really happy with it, but there's not a lot of time to sit down and pat yourself on the back," says Paterson. "You've only got a year and you've got to put the new one out. I mean, we've seen Konami struggle to improve upon what they had. It's going to be tough." And talking of the game both he and Paterson used to prefer, Rutter reveals there's no chance EA will get complacent, even if Konami's series isn't as strong as it once was. "I don't play Pro Evo for fun," he tells us. "A lot of the guys on the team play it to see how they did something that worked well, or if we know that we're going to challenge something. You can guarantee that Ford have got a place somewhere where they're deconstructing a Toyota car..."



♥ The more fluid dribbling will benefit tricky players.



❑ Clichy loses out to Anelka. May as well give him a leg-up.

**BUXOM BRUNETTE:** Athletic and toned, enjoys outdoor activities, raiding tombs and other historical monuments. Seeks perfect high definition partner for evenings together. Superb contrast, deep rich blacks and clear highlights wanted. Must be able to keep up on late night sessions.

**SAS HARD MAN:** Has his sights fixed on a Hi-def partner. Must be capable of displaying explosive action and lightening pace without blurring. May require extended periods in the field in the call of duty. Things can also get a little bit noisy when I'm around, whistling bullets and booming explosions. Can you handle 'ze ach-tion'?

**RAVING RABBIT:** Seeks colourful character for hours of endless fun. Noisy and excitable I need someone who can keep up with me. Vibrant and clear? If so we'll get along like a house on fire. Must be able to handle all my friends, a host of colourful characters often in bright and visually engaging situations.

## "Find the right TV for you"

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# In the mood for...

# Sports stars

## Immortalising PlayStation's elite athletes – and naturally, there's not a Brit among 'em...

Characters in sports games just aren't like those in any other genre. There's no principle hero or chief villain, however hard Cristiano Ronaldo tries. And there are no nameless comrades or generic baddies, all of which makes singling out six icons from the last 15 years tough like your Sunday league boys winning away at Old Trafford. After a night on the pops. With two men down. Even so, we've pulled together a half-dozen PlayStation hall of famers who've wowed us with their virtual sporting feats. Stand up, please: these guys (and yeah, girl) deserve your support.

### Ronaldinho (FIFA)

First rule of sports games: appear on the cover and get +2 added to every attribute! Never more apparent than when Ronny first appeared on the box of FIFA 04 (alongside Sandro Del Piero and Tez Henry) and everyone took to using either Brazil or Barca online to make use of his super-stats. Stupid cheesers. Brilliant player.

### Zinedine Zidane (Pro Evolution Soccer 3)

There've been many PES heroes over the years (props to Nedved and Roberto 'Larcos') but Zizou is king. Back in the day his close control and ability to score from distance made him borderline unplayable. And he was the first player to have a trick – the Marseille roulette – added for him. The stropky Gallic genius.

### Brian Lara (Brian Lara Cricket)

In the late '90s the Windies batsman made a mockery of England's bowling by day, and made successful cricketing videogames by night. Or so we thought, until OPM dep ed Ben sat down to play the real-life Lara at his own game in 2005, and the man who'd lent his name to the series for a decade whispered...  
"What are the controls?"  
A hero nonetheless.

# intermission

A tasty PlayStation snack

## Anna Kournikova (Smash Court Tennis)

Startlingly sexy Russki who, at her peak, had men watching televised tennis just for a microsecond flash of her pants.

Despite not actually being any good, Namco made her the cover star of Smash Court Tennis. Which we obligingly bought, cheeks burning with shame because the HMV assistant knew why.



## Brett Favre (Madden NFL)

With the average NFL career spanning 3.5 years and a new Madden game arriving every August, the chances of racking up ten appearances in EA's Gridiron game are slim. Yet Favre has been slinging precise, rocket-armed touchdowns in 18 consecutive Madden games. He recently retired, a legend on both real and virtual fields.

## Tiger Woods (Tiger Woods PGA Tour)

Eldrick Tont Woods lists a record nine PGA Player Of The Year and 14 Majors wins among his accolades. He's lent his name to 11 iterations of EA's PGA Tour Golf series. He's also married to super hot Swede Elin Nordgren, sleeps on a bed of silk-coated marshmallow clouds and breathes God's own Oxygen. Presumably.



## Now have your say

Have we missed your sporting hero? Let us know at [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com). Ones we almost picked...

■ John Madden (Madden NFL)  
The Gridiron legend has been involved in games for 20 years, but never appeared on the field in one.

■ Tony Hawk (Tony Hawk's)  
Unquestionably a PlayStation icon... but personality-wise he's bored us to tears. There, said it. No going back now.

■ Michael Owen (PES)  
Bust in real life. A lightning-quick wizard in PES. Stupid, obviously, but thanks anyway Konami.

**feature**

Assassin's Creed II



# Blood Line

The first game had ambition and looks, but was undone by its repetitive missions. This is how **Assassin's Creed II**'s new Renaissance man will execute perfectly...



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**feature**

Assassin's Creed II



077



# feature

## Assassin's Creed II



▣ The black knight here might look intimidating, but he'll be a whole lot easier to kill if you can get your hands on his axe.

**E**zio Auditore de Firenze might look familiar – iconic hooded outfit, extra concealed blade, same beautiful cheekbones – but, compared to Altair in the original Assassin's Creed, Ezio is very much the sleek, new 2.0 model.

The first game was all about changing the course of history with a few well-placed stabs, all in a giant open-world version of the Holy Land. It did free-running and beautiful cities right, but managed to make the murdering feel a bit repetitive. And don't even mention the eavesdropping missions. In this sequel the battle between the shady Templars and mysterious assassins sect still rages, but the action has shifted from 1191 to 1476, and

eyes of a different ancestor, a 13th Century Florentine noble on a quest for revenge. Ladies, gentlemen and assassination targets, say buongiorno to Ezio. (Don't shake his hand.)

### Italian stallion


"We wanted to make sure that we have a character who is as popular as Altair, which is no small challenge, because Altair is one of the most popular heroes in videogames," says producer Sebastien Puel. So Ezio is like the spoiled younger sibling. Ubisoft Montréal has given him a first-class education, flashier moves, a handsome face and even seducer powers he can call upon when chatting up the local

▣ Vertiginous Italian architecture makes for a fine game of kiss chase.



## "Ezio is very much the sleek new 2.0 model of killer."

hopped a continent from Jerusalem to Italy. Meanwhile, in the modern day, Desmond, the descendant of both Altair and Ezio, is still being held by sinister corporation Abstergo Industries and chilling in the Animus, the nifty piece of kit that allows Abstergo to recall the past using DNA. This time Desmond's genetic memory shows the world through the

signorinas – we're hoping for a 'fake snog' diversion tactic à la Daniel Craig in Casino Royale. And whereas Altair was quieter than a mime convention, Ezio is a talker. Discussing the controls, Puel and lead game designer Patrick Plourde let slip that there will be dialogue options in the finished game. "There's going to be a lot more interaction with people, so the  button will be used for dialogue a lot more." Pushed further, all they'd say is they "have interesting elements

but that's not something we want to discuss right now". Whatever the final system is, it will need to accommodate the giant cast of new characters Renaissance Italy has to offer.

So far Venice, Florence, the Tuscan countryside and Rome have been confirmed as locations. "The cities in the Middle East were pretty low with very high landmarks," says Puel. "The cities in Italy are higher so it gives more room for climbing, the roofs are different shapes, and it's easier to run on them because there's less hectic architecture." There are also the famous Venetian canals to contend with, and unlike Altair, Ezio has his 25-metres swimming badge. Getting wet will even be essential to

### Weapons

Bored of doing all your killing with swords, daggers and hidden blades? Then you'll enjoy the new range of murderous merchandise on offer. All available at the bargain price of free. (Terms and conditions, like killing its original owner, apply.)



### Long Pikes



### All-new moves

The new skills Ezio will use to conquer the skies, cities and canals



#### Flying

Handy guy to know, that Da Vinci. This flying contrabulation is his work, and uses thermals from fires on the ground to glide.



#### Climbing

Moves like the Climb Leap will help you scale that tall, elaborate Italian architecture.



#### Swimming

Ezio will be able to hide in the water, get around using the canal system, and pull armoured enemies into the drink.



There are different types of guards Ezio will have to face, like the bumbling Militia and the more dangerous Elite.



completing some missions. He'll also have new moves like the Climb Leap, which allows him to jump vertically up walls to reach ledges Altair would only be able to stare sadly at.

The essence of the combat is the same too, but your toybox is bigger. Ezio's twin hidden blades enable new stabby moves, and he's also able to use heavier weapons (axes, pikes) either by disarming an enemy or grabbing them from the floor, then discarding once he's done. And if Ezio ends up on the wrong end of something pointy, he can visit a sidestreet quack for a patch-up. The new moves blend well with the old controls according to Plourde: "If you played the first game, this is going to feel like old slippers." (So speaks

a man who clearly hasn't seen our grim Garfield slippers.) Now, each time you make a kill your notoriety will go up, and you'll have to do more than just run to make it go down. As you become famous for your deeds, guards will spot you a mile off, so you'll need to do side missions, like removing wanted posters and silencing witnesses, to lower your profile.

### Famous faces

Ezio will also get to hang out with some of the period's biggest celebs. Leonardo Da Vinci plays a prominent role – he'll be your go-to man for new equipment and upgrades. Caterina Sforza, a Venetian countess known for political machinations and

Swords

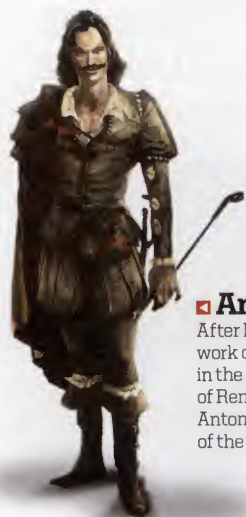


Daggers



# Friends and foes

Meet the movers and shakers in Renaissance-era Italy



### Paula

Raped as a teenager, Paula now leads the courtesan faction and cares for Florence's fallen women.



### Antonio

After learning that hard work counts for nothing in the strict hierarchy of Renaissance Italy, Antonio became head of the thieves guild.



### Caterina Sforza

Caterina is a real-life historical figure, and will no doubt have a few missions for Ezio. She wielded huge power and influence in social and political circles.



### Mercenaries

Currently the most mysterious of the factions. Rough and ready, these men will assist Ezio in his missions... for a price.

### Thieves

The thieves guild has its own code of honour. They only target corrupt nobles and never ordinary citizens.



### Courtesans

The courtesans are based in a Florence brothel, which is part foster home to the young girls, part den of iniquity.



### Archer

Part of the Militia, the archer's bow makes him a particularly pesky opponent when you're trying to escape across the rooftops.



### Militia

The most common enemy Ezio will face. There are three ranks of Militia soldier, all equipped with swords and bows. The higher the rank, the harder to kill.



### Agile

This soldier only wields a small dagger but has some serious free-running skills for chasing Ezio across the city.



### Brute

Built like a tank with just as much armour, the Brute loves two-handed weapons and killing stuff.



### Parano

Particularly dangerous because of his heightened awareness. Ezio will need all his cunning to avoid being spotted by this guy.





▲ The duelling system is still based around timing your counterattacks.

rash behaviour (one historically dubious tale has her flashing her lady garden at her oppressors in an act of defiance) and Machiavelli, known for his famous book on manipulation, The Prince, also get starring roles. Their stories will borrow from history, but with plenty of poetic licence for extra excitement. This time Ezio will be assigned

dubious characters. There are mercenaries, courtesans and thieves, factions that work within the city. Each has a leader who'll happily sell their services to you. Need to sneak past a group of guards? Hire a gaggle of courtesans to distract the men with their womanly charms and you can slip by unnoticed. The better your

# "This doesn't just feel like a sequel, it's deeper than that."

assassination targets by different mission givers, so no more trudging back to the Assassin's Bureau after every kill. Instead, expect a less linear structure with multiple missions available from different bosses at any one time.

When he's not hanging out with the stars of your GCSE coursework, Ezio has to deal with the underworld and all its

relationship with each faction, the better the price you'll get, so it's worth keeping them sweet with the odd side mission.

Of course, to buy their services you'll need money, and that's where the new economic system comes in. Now, when you're pickpocketing all-important information from stinky peasant's pockets, you can have a feel around for coins too, loot the bodies of your

victims or earn cash with side missions. "It's easier to reward the player when he's doing something that isn't on the main path," says Puel. So whatever mission you're on, there's always a chance of shiny coins at the end of it.

With so many new ideas going on, Assassin's Creed II doesn't feel like an update, it's as if the whole franchise has evolved into something much deeper than the original. Elements like banking and dialogue add loads more possibilities, and there's a feeling Ubisoft Montreal still has a lot left to reveal. As we end the interview, Puel makes a big promise. "Whether it's from the gameplay or the animation feedback you get, everything is made in the game to make you feel that you're going through an adventure without reliving the same moment twice." We've heard similar promises before – but, for a ruthless killer, the boy Ezio seems like quite the charmer... ►



PS  
081



▲ Expect an even greater focus on environmental kills – silently pulling a guard into the water or pushing him off a rooftop.



# Interview

Producer Sebastien Puel and lead game designer Patrick Plourde talk da Vinci

**OPM** How much did the feedback on the first Assassin's game affect the decisions you made on this one?

**Sebastien Puel** Every time you develop a game you listen very very closely to the community in the first months, in the conception months, and this helped in building the new proposal for Assassin's Creed II. A lot of the decisions you make are driven by all the feedback you get, and of course it's also driven by the whole vision that was defined years ago and continuing on that same path. More precisely, I think Assassin's Creed delivered something that was truly exceptional, the game delivered on being the first next-gen game that allowed you to interact with a whole city. Now, on Assassin's Creed II, we want to improve on that by working on the diversity of gameplay. That's maybe the point that has driven most of our decisions – making sure that players have a lot of possible activities. How do we make the best of this open world? How do we make sure that the pace is changing all the time through the experience? That's what's driving us.

**OPM** At the end of the first game, there were clues that suggested different locations like Japan, and elements like the Mayan calendar. They didn't seem to suggest Venice. So will the connections become clear as we play through Assassin's Creed II?

**SP** Some of the connections will become clear, but of course, in the first game, you leave a lot of clues. This game won't solve all those clues – we are leaving room for the future – but yes, you will understand much better who Abstergo are, what they are doing, and who Lucy is. At the beginning you're transported from Abstergo to the new

African hideout with the new Animus 2.0 created by the assassins, so essentially you will start to understand some of the clues. Most importantly you'll start to discover more and more about the war between the assassins and the Templars. But I won't say any more right now about that.

**OPM** So will Lucy play more of an active role this time?

**SP** Yeah, she will have a much more active role. In Assassin's Creed it seemed that she might be part of the assassins and in Assassin's Creed II you will uncover much more about her role, and she will be the one directing you in the new Animus 2.0.

**OPM** Can you tell us a bit more about the economic system? We heard that there will be one, but how does that affect your actions and the world?

**SP** As part of this reflection about how to bring more diversity, we wanted a character that evolved through the game much more. If your character evolves, then your experience will evolve. For that we designed an economic system enabling you to buy a lot of new skills.

**Patrick Plourde** So for everything you do in the game you can earn money. So you can pickpocket people, you can loot people you kill, you can complete missions for money, like assassination for hire. You can accumulate money that you can use in a way that will customise your experience. So you can buy weapons from shops, you can buy visual customisation, armour to protect your life points, you can also buy other consumables like bullets or daggers. And you can use your money to buy social interaction with certain factions in the game. You can buy

service from little crews of mercenaries or partisans, and they will help you for a while.

**OPM** So will the prices of the services change depending on your reputation with that faction? So if the courtesans really like you, they'll charge you less?

**PP** Yes, at the start of the game all the factions will be present but they don't know you so they will charge you more – as you make friends with them, the price will come down.

**OPM** There will be some famous renaissance figures popping up in the actual story. How much interaction will you have with them? Will they be mission givers?

**SP** When I was starting to work on this franchise five years ago, one of the things that interested us was showing the behind-the-scenes of the history. That's really what makes this brand and that's the thing that makes the look of this game. In Assassin's Creed we had a beautiful moment for that because of the Crusades. One thing that was a bit lacking maybe was recognisable characters. Outside of Richard Lionheart who everybody knows, the rest of the cast were less famous – even if, historically, they were very influential. So when we started thinking about Assassin's Creed II the Renaissance was really striking because of the people and their genius – they influenced a lot of things like architecture, politics, diplomacy... banking was invented, so that was a very interesting time period. We had a chance to have a very very good cast of characters. Maybe the best known are the artists but there are also writers and politicians like Machiavelli for instance, and very interesting feminine characters like



### Give us a clue

At the end of the first Assassin's Creed Desmond is able to use Altair's Eagle Vision. Use it to glance around the laboratory and you'll find clues scrawled on every available surface. Some of the most interesting are the number 12212012, which refers to the date 21 December 2012. This is when the Mayan calendar ends, and is predicted by some to be the date that the world will end. There are also drawings of a monkey, a hummingbird and a spider which replicate the Nazca Lines of Peru.



Lucy had been helping Desmond all along, and either worked with or as an assassin. Actress Kristen Bell (Forgetting Sarah Marshall, Heroes' Elle Bishop) provided her likeness and also lent her voice to the character. However, it was that voice that eventually got her into a spot of trouble in an interview when she let slip some crucial spoilers about the game's 'time-travel' theme. Oops.

### Love Lucy

At the start of the original Assassin's Creed it seemed as if Lucy Stillman was only going to be a minor character. She did little more than quietly follow Dr Vidic's orders for the good of Abstergo. By the end of the game though, it was looking like



### Lady killer

The courtesans are one of the factions Ezio will meet during the game. In Renaissance Venice a gentleman could seek companionship from two different types of courtesan. The cortigiana onesta were well educated women who provided entertainment and comfort as well as bedroom shenanigans. Some ladies, with the right mix of social politics and support from their customers, even managed to attain an almost noble status in polite society. The cortigiana di lume however were a little rougher round the edges, and a better choice for any man who wanted to skip the talk about poetry and art and get straight to a game of hide the Italian sausage.



Catherine Sforza. So there will be more figures you'll know in the game. Some will be very important for the player. For instance, Leonardo da Vinci will actually be the one designing gadgets for you, and some weapons. He will help you to upgrade your hidden blades. So we are using this behind-the-scenes of history – that before **Leonardo da Vinci was an artist he was a weapon designer and a war engineer.** We used to say that the genius of weapons building was helping the genius of assassination. Leonardo da Vinci will be helping you in this sense, he will be very important for the player because he will be showing you new tools, new tricks like the flying machine – we do not actually know if the flying machine was tried or not in real history, so we say that its pilot was Ezio.

**OPM** So he's like Q to your Bond, only you have to pay for his da Vinci's gear when you visit him, yes?

**SP** He was known to be a bit greedy, his relationship with the Medici in Florence was based on money basically, and he had a reputation for asking for a lot of money and never finishing his work. So we're using the economic system to interact with Leonardo da Vinci.

**OPM** How do you judge the balance between the fiction and the fact when you're using real-life historical figures like da Vinci?

**SP** I think it's pretty special because it's talking about history but it's doing it in a very Hollywood-style way. So first we take a lot of time reading about those characters. We take real facts, like the fact, for instance, that Leonardo was greedy – that's a real fact, and we turn it into moments of script or even

systems sometimes. We took the plans of the flying machine – those are real plans – so I think we are always sticking to an approach which is, "let's take some facts and just put some 'what ifs' on top of that."

**OPM** Assassin's Creed was one of the first 'open-world' games on PS3, but now we've got the likes of inFamous and GTA IV. Have you had a chance to look at any of those games or play any of them?

**PP** I had a chance, yes. But I'm more aware of Prototype in terms of what they're doing. It's much more hectic than the experience we want to create, though. In Assassin's Creed we're killing people, but it's more controlled – we're not just murderers! Both are open world, but I don't think they're necessarily competing because they don't aim for the same emotions in what their experience is proposing.

**OPM** Do you think Assassin's Creed had a big influence on Prototype? Can you see your ideas in there?

**SP** Yes, of course. I think there's a lot of **influence for games like Prototype, but at the same time we're taking a lot of influences from other games.** We're not stealing ideas though – everybody is doing something different and I think it's helping everybody to progress.

**PP** The one thing I think Assassin's Creed has had the most influence on is a different way to think of how to use the space. Every wall is an opportunity and before it wasn't really taken into account. If you look at PS2 games, they are open world, but mainly on one level. What I see from next-gen open-world gaming is that there's more

interactivity with the environment, and if people are inspired by Assassin's Creed to find those new ideas, that new gameplay, then it's flattering for us.

**OPM** Can you tell us what games have influenced you and how they've influenced Assassin's Creed II?

**SP** Our influences are very very broad. It goes from Grand Theft Auto to Mario Galaxy, and it's really looking into the games as designers. There are things that can be very interesting for us, even if we're far away from it in terms of universe and even emotions and experience. So there's not one game that really influenced us for Assassin's Creed II. We've been influenced by everything that's been released since 2007 and even before that. But really it was our reading about the Renaissance and about this very cruel world we live in – that was where we had the most ideas. Even in the gameplay, it was by learning so much about a certain time period that we became inspired.

**PP** Sometimes you play a game that you wouldn't expect to inspire you, and you capture an emotion that then translates to your game. I was playing the **MLB baseball game.** And as I was playing I noticed the **interface of the pitcher's throws, the tactics I had to use as a pitcher – it's really simple – but the dynamic of that battle between the pitcher and the batter.** It influenced me in some ways on how we should treat the combat – I think, 'oh I could capture that emotion, make something that's deep, accessible, and that players could actually play for hours and just have fun.' So inspiration can come from anything.



#### Renaissance man

As well as the timeless honour of having a ninja turtle named after him and inspiring trash thriller The Da Vinci Code, the great renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci is famous for painting the Mona Lisa, The Last Supper and inventing machines like tanks, hang gliders and helicopters. Admittedly his designs weren't particularly practical, but they suggest man who

was way ahead of his time intellectually. Little is known about his personal life, but it is reported that he liked wearing bright colours, was a vegetarian, could play the lyre, and was most probably gay. How and if this information is important when it comes to haggling with the old master in Assassin's Creed II is still unclear, but anything to get a discount, right?



#### Guest star

The mechanics of Assassin's Creed have influenced plenty of games. Every time the word free-running is mentioned on a box you know the developer has spent time with Altair, but there are more subtle nods to it elsewhere. Complete all the assassination missions in Grand Theft Auto IV and you'll bag the Assassin's Creed Trophy, for instance. Hero Altair has managed to

rack up plenty of cameos, too. In 2008 a video appeared of Altair in Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots, and was hailed as an April Fool's day joke. Soon after, the skin was actually released. It turns out MGS director Hideo Kojima is a big fan, and even visited Ubisoft Montreal's studio. Altair also showed up in Prince Of Persia, and Ubisoft included an assassin rabbit in Rayman Raving Rabbids 2 on Wii.



#### Pitch perfect

The pitching interface in MLB 09: The Show contains a massive amount of options, yet they're all arranged to make this key element of baseball as user-friendly as possible. Each face button corresponds to a different type of pitch, while the

left stick controls placement, and a yellow marker denotes where your catcher (the guy in all the padding who squats down behind the batter) thinks you should throw it, based on the current game scenario and batter's strengths and weaknesses. A three-press swing-o-meter (as made popular in golf games) is then used to decide how accurate your pitch is.

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**The  
OPM review  
setup**



Our review code is tested on hi-def and standard-def TVs to ensure we know how games perform at both ends of the scale. Our HD setup is a 70" Sony Bravia with Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

# PlayStation Official Magazine - UK Reviews

Your essential guide to every new release

**L**ots to see and do this month. First there's Ghostbusters, which after a tortuous journey from Vivendi to the brink of oblivion to Atari is finally being brought to us by Sony, and as a PlayStation exclusive. We've been desperate for it to arrive for ages – turn over to see if it lives up to the hype.

After that we've got an exclusive review of tongue-in-cheek fantasy sequel Overlord II and, having fallen in love with inFamous, we put another open-world superhero actioner through its paces in the form of Prototype. Then there's off-world demolition in THQ's unexpectedly ace Red Faction: Guerrilla, and Warner Bros' Terminator Salvation, which is the worst film tie-in since, ooh, Warner's last film tie-in, Watchmen.

And there's loads more – stern hack/slashing from innovative import Demon's Souls, arcade baseline rallies in Virtua Tennis 2009, solid two-wheeled racing in SBK 09, and the best Tetris-style puzzler on PSN since forever in the amazing Trash Panic.



86

## GHOSTBUSTERS

Doh! Ray! Egon! Featuring the original cast, and a script written by Akroyd and Ramis, can this live up to its billing as the 'third film' in the series?



90

## OVERLORD II

If we had minions in real life, we'd likely use them to murder, steal and spread our influence. Overlord gets us around the legal issues of actually doing this.



94

## RED FACTION: GUERRILLA

Think Saints Row minus the white trash BS, with a massive hammer, on Mars. We predict a big spike in sledge hammer sales come Christmas time. Bosh!

## How we score our reviews...

### 10 Essential

Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection.

### 9 Outstanding

Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

### 8 Very good

Mostly excellent, but held back by one or two minor flaws.

### 7 Good

Enjoyable, but with definite room for improvement. Rent it first.

### 6 Reasonable

A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places.

### 5 Average

A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measure.

### 4 Below average

Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity.

### 3 Poor

A seriously flawed game with no long-term appeal.

### 2 Awful

A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

### 1 Horrific

Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.

**GOLD  
AWARD**  
PlayStation.

## Our highest accolade

The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and profound appeal.



✓ The four-man multiplayer – with new monsters and missions – next month.

Extra sensory

# Ghostbusters

They're the best, the beautiful, the only... They're back!

**T**he trapping works. That's what you need to know. I mean, it really works. And the Ghostbusters are not only all here, they're still smart and funny. Everything else either falls into place or fades into insignificance after these central facts have been established – the first time I trapped a ghost as the Busters' deliberately generic new recruit with Dan Ackroyd's Ray Stantz talking me through the motions, there was a wave of physical relief. 'This isn't just going to be fine, this is going to be good.'

Basically, this is the best and most accomplished use of a film license and

### Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA**  
**Out now** **Pub** Sony  
**Dev** Terminal Reality  
**Players** 1-4 **Web**  
[ghostbustersgame.com](http://ghostbustersgame.com)  
**It's like** The pain and tears of the last 17 years never happened and everything's okay in the world again.

top-line talent since too long ago to remember. And it's a perfect storm, in that there are few films which inspire the same kind of rose-tinted adoration as Ghostbusters. So often games over-promise and under-deliver when trying to mix it with Hollywood. Think Scarface with its Al Pacino soundalike, and The Godfather with no Pacino at all. We're used to knock-offs and second-rate tie-ins. But now Ghostbusters has happened, and it's polished and professional, and while it's not a brilliant game, it's a brilliant something, that's also, crucially, really good fun to play.

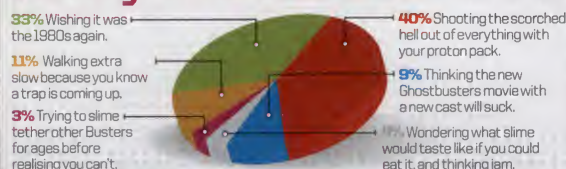
### We had the team

The fact that all four of the original Ghostbusters are on board is huge. It gives the game an atmosphere of real authority – so much so that the introduction of your slightly lame, unnamed newbie is easy to ignore. You're nobody, basically, an empty lump of man designed to let players join in with the

Ghostbusters as they deal with the return of Gozer. The game itself boils down to standard third-person blasting with some film-themed bells and whistles (more on which in a second). But thanks to the loving treatment of the material, there are times, especially early on but really whenever the music kicks in at just the right moment or one of guys delivers a killer line, when you catch yourself actually smiling. I know.

The likenesses of the Ghostbusters are decent, easily recognisable if a little cartoonish. The team's firehouse HQ, which you're free to roam between levels, is also packed with trivial bits and pieces from the films – the sadly absent Louis Tully's desk with a sick note taped to a computer monitor, the (still talking) painting of Vigo the Carpathian, the upstairs pool table and kitchen (and yes, of course there's a Trophy for sliding down the pole). Adding enormously to the atmosphere is the film's easily overlooked score, which has

### What you do in... Ghostbusters





Shades of Fahrenheit 451 as the 'busters turn their nuclear accelerators on the library.



something for every occasion – tiptoeing along playfully one moment, becoming ominously haunting the next, and then surging into full-on blockbuster action whenever required.

Best of all, the script is a big crowd-pleaser, and deals cleverly with the

difficulties of being a half-sequel shifted into a different medium. Basically, people want to enjoy the things they know and love about the Ghostbusters, but also want something new. And the game gives it to them, resisting the temptation to trot out much-loved lines from the movies (I was braced for 'That would be bad' when my rookie character was learning about the dangers of crossing the streams) and instead keeping things faithful but fresh. So Venkman still hits on any women in sight, Ray talks fast and calls you Hoss, Winston is the practical everyman and Egon is the master of the wry understatement ('Do I still have my eyebrows?' he asks following an explosion).

### Not a toy

The familiarity-versus-freshness issue also comes up when the game has to turn being a Ghostbuster into something playable. The big news, as I say, is that trapping works. You fire your proton beam with **RT** (the pack, by the way, looks *amazing*, solid and heavy with loads of bright lights and oh God I want one) until the spook you're after is ragged, then slide a trap across the floor with **○**. Once the ghost's energy is below a certain level your beam will drag as well as damage, so then it's a matter of pulling him/her/it into the beam of light emitting from the trap, and yanking

the spook inside.

Different levels of spirit are more or less resistant to the trap, and to help you wrestle them inside the game introduces 'slamming' – throwing them into a wall or ceiling by pressing **LB** to trigger an explosive jolt from your beam. When things get really busy and you have a crowd to work through it feels like snagging individual ghosts takes too long, but basically the whole process looks like what they're doing in the films, and is fun to do yourself – victory.

### Get her!

On the reasonable grounds that using the same gun for the entirety of the game's six or so hours would be crackers, the weapons stray from those used in the movies. It's smoothly if

Proton beams bend as you wrangle spooks into position above your trap.



**Proton power**  
The Ghostbusters' packs are perfect, full of bleeping lights and gadgets, and they unleash amazing, hotel-torching power.



**The boys**  
Reuniting the cast could've gone horribly wrong, but instead totally makes the game – they are the Ghostbusters.



**Spectral effects**  
The luminous cartoonish look of the new ghosts fits perfectly with those from the films.

### LOVING

#### Dreary corridors

Generally the levels are full of colour and variety, but once or twice stray into samey low-textured hallways.



#### Trash monsters

Big monsters made from *stuff* are the laziest enemies ever. They make story sense, but still, come on, developers.



### HATING



▲ In one of the later levels, Central Park transforms into a Hammer-style haunted forest.

conventionally done (the rookie is nominated as the team's experimental tech guy and given a new toy at the start of every level) and the new weapons fit well with the feel of the films. There are four in total, each mapped to a direction on the D-pad, and each with a secondary fire. The full list runs: proton beam, freezing beam, punchy rocket beam and slime. Different ghosts are vulnerable to different beams, and although none of them are as fun to use as the fizzing orange-and-blue original, there are some nice touches. The shock blast – an icy buck shot – is good for thinning out crowds of spectral scum, while the slime tether – a contracting green rope you fire at two objects to pull them together – paves the way for some simple but satisfying puzzles.

### I love this town

Elsewhere little asides and props which you may not even remember from the films have been expanded (always in line with their role in the original, to the game's credit). So Tobin's Spirit Guide, which sharp-eared or straight-up nerdy viewers will remember as one of the paranormal reference books mentioned by Ray and Egon, is now an interactive database giving details on the spooks you encounter (things like class of ghost, pre-death trivia, and more useful stuff like what type of proton pack beam

## The meanest spooks

Three of the nastiest ghouls you'll find in Tobin's spirit guide



**CONSTRUCTION GUY**

Building New York city's bridges and skyscrapers caused the deaths of hundreds of construction workers. Now they're roaming the streets wolf-whistling chicks from beyond the grave.

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Former name</b>     | Bill                       |
| <b>Category</b>        | Class III animated spectre |
| <b>Type</b>            | Ghost                      |
| <b>Weakness</b>        | Proton stream              |
| <b>Trap resistance</b> | Low                        |
| <b>Special power</b>   | None                       |



**LIBRARIAN**

The first ghost ever to be hunted by the Ghostbusters, the shushing librarian returns. Turns out she was romantically involved with the head of an occultist sect who was into all kinds of bad stuff.

|                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Former name</b>     | Dr Eleanor Twitty        |
| <b>Category</b>        | Class IV anchored entity |
| <b>Type</b>            | Ghost                    |
| <b>Weakness</b>        | Proton stream            |
| <b>Trap resistance</b> | Low                      |
| <b>Special power</b>   | Summons book bats        |



**STAY PUFT**

The last incarnation of the ancient god of destruction, Gozer the Gozerian is now mysteriously back in Manhattan and smashing up Times Square as the first sign of a new wave of paranormal activity.

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Former name</b>     | N/A                       |
| <b>Category</b>        | Class VII outsider avatar |
| <b>Type</b>            | Deity                     |
| <b>Weakness</b>        | Boson darts               |
| <b>Trap resistance</b> | N/A                       |
| <b>Special power</b>   | Summons minions           |



▲ Winston, the forgotten Buster, toasting a fat opera-ghost.

Taking this basic template of trapping, tracking and chatting, the game moves through its by-the-numbers 'return of Gozer' storyline with an unfussy level-by-level, boss-by-boss structure. It's traditional and functional rather than groundbreaking, with a few clumsy difficulty spikes (it took me a frustrating age to clear an office of Stay Puft's marshmallow minions, but just seconds to defeat a huge slime lizard boss several levels later) and some darkened

"Finally, here's a big movie license with the game to back it up."

they're vulnerable to). The guide also ties in with the PKE Meter, which is used in the game as a scanner for collectibles, clues and enemies.

You can identify new spooks and monsters with the PKE Meter by pressing **Q2** when it's equipped (the closer you are, the more stable the reading). But it's also used for tense corridor-stalking moments and some fun-but-cheap scares, when the signal leads you – through claustrophobic

first-person night-vision – to a door which bursts open, or a pool of slime which erupts into a gruesome spectre.

corridor sections which become plain dreary (a webbed spiders' lair in the Sedgewick hotel was a low point).

Mostly, though, the structure works. It's a straightforward way to showcase what the game is *really* about – the Ghostbusters getting back together and you, brilliantly, being one of them, leaving scorched black proton burns all over Manhattan. Strictly in terms of gameplay, this is probably a 7/10 – fun and polished if a little repetitive – but there's absolutely an extra level of

enjoyment and quality here thanks to the smart and sensitive use of much-loved material. Christ, it's good to be able to say that – finally, here's a big license with the game to back it up. We got one!

**Nathan Dittum**



**2up**  
second opinion

**Name** Ben Wilson  
**Angle** Egon wannabe

"Vigo the Carpathian – the painting from *Busters 2* with the moving eyes – used to sh\*t me right up. I expected this to do the same, but no; miraculously it does justice to the celebrated name on the box. The humour, particularly when it involves Bill Murray, is spot on, it looks *just right*, and trapping ghouls is as fun as you dreamed it would be 20 years ago. Downside: Vigo's in it, so I can only play with the lights on."

**Best for...**  
Children of the '80s





▣ Herding your minions around is like leading sociopathic toddlers through a sweet shop.



Micro manager

# Overlord II

Proof that treating 'em mean keeps 'em keen



One of the worst things about games is that they make you do *everything*. Like, win World War 2, on your bloody own, or save the Earth from aliens while everyone else either runs away or gets set on fire. Well not anymore. In Overlord you get to sit back with a nice cup of tears while your minions do all the heavy lifting.

Assuming you didn't play the original – because only seven people did – here's how it works. You're the new Overlord, son of the old game's Overlord (currently trapped in a hellish abyss), and your inheritance is a gang of grubby little goblins to do your bidding. There are four

types of minion, each with their own special skills. The brown ones are tough melee fighters, the greens are stealthy, reds throw fire, and blues are the only minions that don't drown in water. The trick is to use all the skills together to solve puzzles and kill things. It sounds confusing, but your fugly gang is easy to control, leaving you to concentrate on plotting and being mean. You can send them all out in one ugly mass, by pointing at whatever you want them to carry, destroy or kill, or choose just one type of minion with a tap of the face buttons. If you want to control them more directly you can sweep the whole lot of them with the right stick, perfect if they need to go somewhere you can't follow. It's idiot proof, and if you ever make a mistake you can call them back easily.

### Pets corner

So the vibe is very much Nintendo's Pikmin as reimagined by Terry Pratchett. Which makes sense, given that the story

is the work of his daughter Rhianna. According to it, you've just returned from the Netherworld, where you've been raised by minions since you were just an Overlad (which sums up the game's daft humour). The reason you've come back is that a Roman-like civilisation called the Empire has been capturing and slaughtering magical creatures, enslaving populations, and being generally villainous. This is, of course, terrible, because that's *your* job.

To help the cause your minions have some new tricks. They can disguise



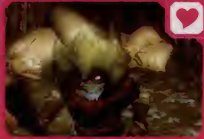
▣ Most of the Empire's army is made up of sandal-wearing buffoons who scatter when scared.

## What you do in... Overlord II





**Mistresses**  
Behind every great Overlord is an angry wench or three, ready to support, love and nag you about the décor.



**Overlad**  
The face of evil... in a tiny fur hood and boots! The kiddie Overlord should have an entry on cuteoverlord.com.



**Panda punch**  
Always judging, sat there in their emo eye make-up, munching bamboo. Show that snobby WWF panda who's boss.

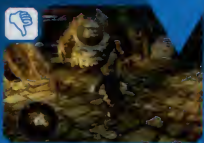


**Quaver**  
Quaver the Jester is always on hand with an amusing limerick and a smarmy remark. Little bug-eyed git.

### LOVING

#### Boring monsters

Face like a potato and flesh that absorbs minion attacks like a masochistic sponge. Boooooo!



### HATING

themselves, for one thing, dressing up like children or Empire soldiers to fool enemies. And each minion also has a different sort of mount – browns can use wolves to jump gaps and smash through formations of enemy soldiers, for instance, while greens have spiders for climbing. You can even possess a minion directly using one of the magical stones dotted around the world, accessing areas your Overlord body is too big to reach and controlling their skills firsthand.

## Hands-on management

Aside from commanding his minions, the Overlord himself divides his time between slashing stuff up with frenzied combos and casting spells. Each spell can take either destruction or domination forms, like a sort of primary and secondary fire. Lock on to a peasant with your default target spell, for instance, and you can kill them up by holding down **Ⓢ**, or turn them into slack-jawed slaves by letting go a little earlier. Similarly your halo spell can either blast enemies in every direction or boost the stats of your scrapping minions. Your base of operations is your Netherworld throne, from which you can mercifully teleport to missions across different lands, and also receive visitors begging for amusing favours. This gives you a proper, nasty power buzz – I blanked the Nordbergians



Overlord Jnr, all wrapped up warm and ready to pillage, slaughter and terrorise.



You get split-screen offline multiplayer and online co-op maps.



The minions never turn down a scrap, no matter how obviously suicidal the odds.



Magical objects can be carried back to the tower to boost your spells and weapon upgrades.

## Like this?

Play these



**Overlord: Raising Hell**  
Find out where the new Overlord got his evil genes in the original, complete with ferocious unicorns.  
**VERDICT 8**



**The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion**  
Fantasy without the fart jokes. Vanquish evil, slay zombies and try vampirism in the lands of Cyrodiil.  
**VERDICT 10**

when someone was trying to steal their food, but got stuck right in when a hippy village started up nearby. Peace and love? Not on my watch, communists!

And this is Overlord II's hook – its twisted world and the freaks that fill it. There are the grotesque, big-buttocked mermaids that leap onto your ship, eco-conscious elves, busty dryads, fat fairies that cast love spells on your minions, tiny exploding gnomes, Eradicators who suck up magical creatures with a glowing Dyson. Yes, the dungeons-and-dragons setting might look about as cool as a 12-sided dice, but the point is that Overlord II subverts all the really nerdy stuff with bug-eyed charm and mean gags (one mission has you actually clubbing seals).

Most of the bugs from the inconsistent original have been successfully ironed out, although the camera is still a pain. It can't decide who it needs to show, the Overlord or the minions he's controlling, and so sometimes flips between the two confusingly. And while taking down the bigger

enemies is usually fun – figuring out what minions and abilities best exploit their weaknesses, like smashing up the giant Spider Queen with greens flower bombs – you'll occasionally find one who just needs leathering. Stab, stab, yawn.

But these are just minor niggles in what is a mostly funny, always engaging and – crucially – enjoyable fantasy farce. It's *likeable*, in a gentle, tricky-to-nail kind of way – more naughty step than all-out nefarious, with a nerdy charm that's

backed up by lively slash-and-spells gameplay. Basically, it's a big improvement over the original, and one that deserves to be played by loads more people. So *at least* eight of you this time, yeah?

Rachel Penny



❑ We find it's best to look down the sights when firing a sniper rifle, love.



❑ Rourke can shoot while edging along ropes and other obstacles. It's not much fun though.



❑ Bikes! Just like in real life, they're handily left lying around before jumpable gaps in the road.



Grinding gears

# Damnation

Nicer than actual hell, but only because it ends

**Info**

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Codemasters Dev Blue Omega Players 1-12 Web [snipurl.com/19u07](http://snipurl.com/19u07) It's like Gears Of War with a cowboy hat instead of a cover system.

Here's why Damnation's shooting is hollow and hardly any fun at all: when I fire a gun at something, I expect my bullet to arrive before that something explodes, glows red or, in the case of Damnation's masked genero-men, fails to register any kind of pain or damage whatsoever. This isn't how it works here, because here the basic but crucial connection between 'noise of gun', 'animated bullet' and 'explodey effect' is all to cock. The worst offender is the game's default pea-shooter, which spits out weedy lines of impossibly slow-moving tracer fire which are constantly playing catch-up with the damage they've caused. The bigger weapons are little

## Castlist

### Our hero



Hamilton Rourke

### Feisty chick



Yakecan

### Side-kick



Ramon Zagato

better – machine guns rattle off rounds at a rate unconnected to the sound effect you hear, and even hefty slugers like the shotgun or railroad spike gun have only a muted visual impact. There's no punch to any of it, no recoil or heft or actual noticeable damage.

## Damn and blast

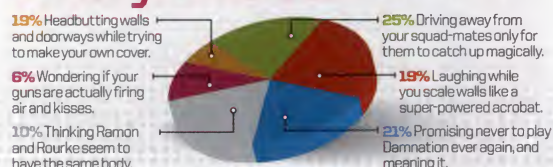
It leaves you feeling distant and removed from the action, something which the game's fiddly movement does exactly nothing to help. Damnation uses the same Unreal 3 engine as Gears Of War, and in its over-saturated lighting effects and fat-gunned apocalypse has clearly borrowed a lot from the 360 hit. What it doesn't borrow, and which it really ought to have, is Gears' excellent cover system – or, in fact, any cover system at all. It simply doesn't have one, unless you count defying the twitchy animation to painstakingly position yourself behind walls and pillars. Which we don't. This renders the gunfights almost totally joyless, stepping out from behind a pile of bricks to fire ineffectually at people who don't really react and then nudging yourself out of sight again. Incredibly, having not implemented something as

basic as cover, Damnation does stretch to a half-arsed acrobatic system. The game is billed as a 'vertical' shooter, but given that your fat-brimmed freedom fighter Hamilton Rourke walks with stiff-legged difficulty, this is ambitious. And, in the end, useless – the system is very basic, with Rourke only able to pull himself up small ledges and leap over modest gaps. It's also unintentionally hilarious – press sprint button **RT** while shimmying along edges, for instance, and Rourke moves in jittery fast-forward, and there's one back-to-the-wall pull-up animation that's physically impossible.

Other things are bad and wrong. The cut-scenes are stilted and undramatic, with poorly performed and assembled voicework. Worse still, the 'mean industrialist in alternate history America' story is a big unoriginal yawn. There's a bit of motorbiking thrown in for variety, but aside from a twitch of interest when you realise you can ride on the walls (but not upside down) it's dull.

And when too many things blow up at the same time (always a danger if you litter your levels with lazy blow-up barrels) there's some bad slowdown. All round, a fairly significant disaster. **Nathan Ditum**

## What you do in... Damnation



Roman roads

# Superstars V8 Racing

What, more cars? Really?

**I**t's a budget racing game based on a license nobody's heard of, and it's... good? Has developer Milestone – best known for the steadily-improving World Superbike games – gone mad? That's not how it's supposed to be. It's supposed to be disappointing.

## Forza Italia

Instead, this game of an obscure Italian championship rams itself convincingly between the showbiz pomp of Grid and the po-faced data crunching of Gran Turismo. It's fast, smooth and pretty, and while you may not know the teams, you probably won't know the tracks either. And that's a good thing: there are only ten, but it's likely at least half will be brand new to your brain.

There's Varano, Adria, Magione and the wonderfully fast Vallelunga on the Italian side, while the comparatively little-seen Kyalami and

Portimao circuits represent the South African and Portuguese races. The more familiar Valencia, Monza, the always-brilliant Mugello and the re-developed Misano round them out.

SV8R has all the options you could want, from help-laden Quick Races against easy AI to full weekends and championships where practice, setup and skill are vital. Weather effects are sexy, the AI's fun to race – a little simple-headed, but lively and aggressive – and there's even a 12-player online mode. All this would mean nothing if the handling was crooked, but it's good. There's an impressive feel of both weight and power to these cars (heavily modified

saloons including BMWs, Audis and even S-Type Jags) and if they're a little dead in a slide, they are at least saveable. At £30 new this could easily fill your time until Grid 2. Maybe even GT5...

Steve Williams

With 19-car packs, some of the tracks can prove a little tight.



Farcical flop

# Leisure Suit Larry Box Office Bust

The sexy adventure that's a big bundle of tits

**L**eisure Suit Larry has been sleazing his way through unfunny adventure games for over 20 years, so it's some achievement that this is his worst. Actually, the hero of the Hollywood-set Box Office Bust is the original Larry's nephew, but basically the two are

Play Larry for too long and you'll wish you really were blind.

indistinguishable – unwholesomely porn-obsessed slobs who find tedious sexual innuendo in everything.

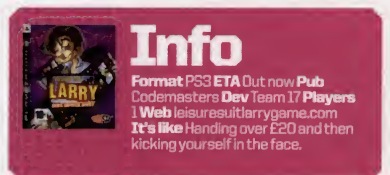
## We'd give it one

Right from its ludicrously extended install, where you stare at single piece of utterly chronic 'art', Leisure Suit Larry astonishes with its crapness. Despite its simplistic, cartoonish textures, the frame rate staggers like a toddler in a wind tunnel. Whole buildings materialise, and seconds later their textures arrive. Meanwhile, driving one of the game's pathetic golf carts is terrible, like waking from an epileptic seizure to find pirates hijacking your face. Or at least as unpleasant.

The platforming, on the other hand, is just insulting. Larry floats about like some

ghostly marshmallow, sliding blurrily off random things and glitching right through others. Sometimes there's falling damage, sometimes there's not. Luckily the 'action' is insultingly simplistic and dull, so there's little to challenge you beyond the controls and the horrible camera. Puzzles, if you can call them that, are limited to things like moving a box six feet. And if the pace and nature of events here are really what constitute adventure, then I had an adventure doing the washing up last night.

And through it all, the most objectionable thing is Larry himself. He's supposed to be ribald, 'saucy' and grown up, but he's absolutely not. He's slimy, detestable and inadequate. Burn this. It's the only way to be sure. **Steve Williams**



## Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Codemasters Dev Team 17 Players 1 Web leisuresuitlarrygame.com It's like Handling over £20 and then kicking yourself in the face.





▲ "If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning, I'd hammer enemy skulls..."

094

Hammer time

# Red Faction Guerrilla

### Get your ass to Mars

**T**his is the gaming equivalent of throwing a hotel TV out of the window. It knows one simple truth: smashing things rules! Sure, it looks like another sci-fi shooter starring some lunk with a buzz cut, but it's actually one big excuse to break stuff, mostly with a massive hammer, but also with a series of ludicrous weapons. The rule is, if it's man-made it can be destroyed. Hey, you had us at 'massive hammer'.

The mayhem takes place on Mars in 2125, where the ruling Earth Defense Force (EDF) has gone all tyrannical and done away with your brother. The lunk is

**Info**

**Format** PS3 **ETA**  
**Out now** **Pub** THQ  
**Dev** Volition **Players**  
**1-16** **Web** redfaction.com **It's like** Anger management therapy without the exorbitant fees.

Alec Mason, a new recruit in the rebel group Red Faction, and you're a wanted man. As you battle the EDF for control of Mars' various districts, you face savage Marauders and discover the powers of Martian nanotechnology. Not bad for an ex-miner dressed like a binman.

### Rebel yell

So you're a rebel, but not the 'sit-down protests and strongly worded letters' kind. Your contribution to the cause boils down to two things: shooting men and making things blow up. It's a winning combination. Plenty of games brag about destructibility, only to disappoint – hang your heads, Mercenaries 2 and Battlefield: Bad Company – but this is the real deal. Can't find a door? Smash through the wall. Need to slow down an enemy convoy? Fill the bridge with remote charges and stand back. You *could* say this approach makes you think more tactically about missions, but the

truth, is you'll just want to see how much of a mess you can make of the landscape. Ooh, is that a fuel tank?

The open-world setup is broken down into different areas, and you have to complete a string of guerrilla tasks in each one to open the next. These can be anything from rescuing prisoners from a town under attack, to taking out towers with a rocket launcher. There are plenty of side missions too, such as ambushing an EDF convoy or rescuing hostages from enemy buildings, and the mercifully comprehensive map and GPS system make navigation a doddle.

You start off with just a hammer, and tonking stuff feels brilliant. Volition has talked up the realism of its destruction, but it's more Hollywood FX than physics lesson. Which means lurid fireballs, whizzing shrapnel and oily smoke. Heart.

You can upgrade any of the weapons you pick up using salvage collected from smashed up objects. Mason can carry

### What you do in... Red Faction



## Five things to blow up in Red Faction



### FUEL TANK

Dare to break open its shiny, irresistible curves and for a few beautiful seconds you'll be treated to a glorious rhapsody in green/orange. ★★★



### SMOKE STACK

So tall, so strong, so erect... until you gently place explosives round it and watch it topple sadly like an ancient Redwood at the hands of a manly lumberjack. Win! ★★★



### EDF ARMoured CAR

Beneath the plain Jane looks of this grey vehicle lies a rather naughty, explosive heart. Free it from its prison with a few pounds of your mighty hammer. ★



### PETROL STATION

Don't drive by this lady when she tempts you from the roadside. As fuel gushes forth so will heat, flames, and booming explosions. I need a lie down. ★★★★★



### POWER REACTOR

Not easy to find or destroy, but if you can make this large, charged beauty submit to your will then you'll become the sexy master of massive combustion. Mmmm. ★★★★★



▲ It wouldn't be Mars without some vaguely futuristic air support hovering overhead.



▲ "Oooh, pink!" Generally the prettier the explosion, the more likely it is to kill you.



▼ Whatever type of mission you're on, it'll end with mess, flames and death.

four weapons at once, swapping them at the safehouses dotted around the map and switching them in and out with a simple tap of a button. One spot is always saved for the hammer, and you'll no doubt keep faith with the sticky remote mines too (throw, throw, BOOM). The guns are less fun – aiming is heavy, and the standard issue rifle and pistols feel weak like spud guns.

Each area has its own morale meter gauging feeling among civilians, which is boosted every time you complete a mission or break EDF property. As the bar rises other colonists take up arms and join the Red Faction, and if they arrive in big enough numbers they can provide genuinely helpful backup (mostly in the sense they provide extra things for the enemy to shoot at). The downside is that every time you die the morale gauge drops, which is pretty harsh for a game that has you juggling explosives. It'll also drop if a rebel gets killed, and will plummet if you're the one to 'accidentally' kill them. Which you will, especially when you get behind the wheel. Honestly, does

## "Shooting men and making things blow up. A winning combination."

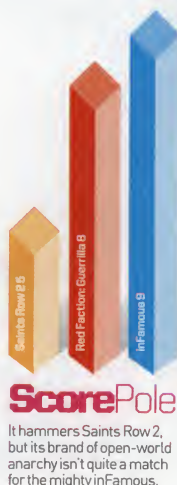
the Green Cross Code mean nothing on Mars?

The vehicles have an ace industrial-utilitarian look to them, covered with metal plates and domed cockpits. They also have an annoying habit of rolling though (the Mars roads are a little rough), and once over they stay over, so you're forced to find something else. It may sound like a small flaw, but anything that gets between you and your next explosion becomes pretty tedious, pretty fast. It's not the only problem either. The world looks great, especially considering the palette consists of brushed metal and red mud, but occasionally glitches let it down – sometimes Mason passes straight through debris. The missions are unavoidably repetitive, too – it turns out even explosions get old.

But if you buy this, it'll be for the chaos, not the vehicles or visuals, and on that front it delivers a mushroom cloud of glory. What we've seen of the multiplayer is strong, too. The smash and grab dynamic translates perfectly and there's a gun that rebuilds broken structures, and backpacks for special powers, like invisibility. Capture the flag is a whole different deal when no one can see you.

And when the internet collapses under the weight of camgirls and LOLcats, you'll still have Wrecking Crew, an offline pass-the-pad competition to do the most destruction in the least time.

It's a quick hit of mayhem for the maniac in a rush. Red Faction: Guerrilla might be all about the simple pleasures, but you won't find a better way to work through those anger issues. **Rachel Penny**





Passing interest

# Virtua Tennis 2009

Shallow but pretty, much like the girl of our dreams

There's a childproof simplicity to Virtua Tennis that means it's still the most accessible tennis game on PS3 (out of, erm, two). It's strong on the basics – bright and pretty visuals draw you in, along with a roster of tennis pros that, in the towel-down cut-scenes at least, look realistic and easily recognisable (Nadal's vein-popping biceps are authentically terrifying, and Sharapova is still the prettiest of what can kindly be described as a mixed bunch).

## Advantage idiot

The real selling point, though, remains the game's no-nonsense three-shot controls: **X** hits a hard, low topspinner, **A** throws up a lob, and both **○** and **□** slice the ball. Returning itself is simple, but hitting a shot with enough power and precision to beat your opponent demands smart positioning and timing – the sooner you're in place, holding your shot button and the direction you want it to go in, the faster and more accurate it'll be. Get pushed wide, though, and you'll always be playing catch-up, with overstretched shots flopping like dying birds into your opponent's court. If there's a downside to this instant

## Super Fans



**Andy pair**  
Unlike Murray, fitness is high.



**Crown court**  
Head-under-heels at Wimbledon.



**Spanish pistols**  
Nadal faithful demand flesh.

playability it's that the game ultimately lacks real depth. VT 2009 makes you feel like a pro immediately, but never like you've really earned it. Rival Top Spin 3 has the edge here – its complex stick controls might mean missing shots like a recovering drunk for the first hour, but the resulting learning curve is satisfying in a way VT can't touch.

This is felt most in the single-player mode. Even on the harder settings you can win entire matches from the baseline by just using a single button and hammering the ball into the corners. World Tour, in which you develop a custom player over a 20-year career, fares a little better thanks to its focus on progression (and the fact you can give yourself a massive McEnroe-style poodle cut and headband). The matches themselves are still simple, but the bigger development arc keeps you pressing on. That said, the pro-player tuition feels flat (Tim Henman: "Hit a powerful shot to put the ball past your opponent." Me: "Thanks, Tiger.") and as the difficulty can't be changed, the game is far too



Every surface plays realistically, so games on clay tend to be slow affairs featuring long rallies.



Hitting **SELECT** switches to a behind-your-player view. It also makes the game near impossible.



This giant pool-tennis hybrid is one of the new, and frankly crackers, mini-games on offer.



## Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sega **Dev** Sega **Players** 1-4 **Web** sega.co.uk/games/virtua-tennis-2009 **It's like** All the other Virtua Tennis games, with better graphics.

easy and quickly becomes repetitive.

The good news is that playing with friends is still really fun. Against intelligent opposition, winning becomes not just a matter of mechanical timing, but of anticipation and mind games, working your opponent from side to side before mixing it up with a drop shot or a ball back across court to the corner from which they're running. If you're dead set on being cynical you could say this just underlines the failures of the AI players – which it kind of does – but more importantly it means Virtua Tennis is still

PS3's most enjoyable court experience when played against real people. Or on your own if you're fond of Russian tennis honeypots and don't have the internet in your bedroom. Either way, a win. **Tom Pakinkis**



# Dynasty Warriors Strikeforce

Format PSP **ETA** Out now **Pub** Koel



Dynasty Warriors is the one with all the enemies – hundreds of them – for you to cut to bits in battle-sized missions that recreate the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Except this Dynasty Warriors is a little bit different. It's still set in the Three Kingdoms, but it's been completely redesigned for PSP. Inspired by Capcom's Monster Hunter, this version is all about teaming up with two or three friends via ad-hoc multiplayer, and taking on intense, bite-sized



missions. With a more varied range of mission objectives and loads more scope to customise your character, it all works surprisingly well, but while it's still fun in single-player, it's much better with friends. **David McCarthy**



# Inferno Pool

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now **Pub** Dark Energy



You own GTA IV right? And you know it has a pool mini-game? Then you don't need to spend £6.29 on this. It's only worth a look if you desperately need to play pool online, or you want to do it on a table that looks like it could give you herpes. Inferno Pool has four-man online matches (I'd say 'player', but no women would ever visit this bar), local multiplayer and Inferno Pool mode, in which the balls you pot can be 'fired' over to your competitor's table.



Different, but unfortunately not as much fun as an actual game of pool in a real bar. And just to add insult to injury, Inferno Pool started out as an iPhone app – costing a paltry 59p. Boo. **Rachel Penny**



# SingStar Pop Edition

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sony



PS3's sixth SingStar Blu-ray is its most eclectic – surprising, given the 'Pop Edition' moniker – and also one of its weakest. The problem isn't the lack of bona fide karaoke classics – on that front, Bon Jovi's 'Livin' On A Prayer' (pop, huh?) and Robbie Williams' 'Angels' are welcome inclusions – but that the tracklist tries to offer something for everyone, and thus spreads itself too thinly. Kings Of Leon and... *Chris de Burgh?* Kaiser Chiefs and... *Jordin Sparks?* This inescapably



uncomfortable clash of genres means that you might get ten songs you like for your 25 quid, but on the net you can get 25, self-chosen, for the same price. Sorry, Angels, I'm loving SingStore instead.



**Ben Wilson**

## PlayList

Essential tunes to download this month

### Speech Debelles Speech Therapy

Format Album **ETA** Out now **Price** £7.99

Not your everyday rapper, and not just because she's a lass: Debelles's debut album *Speech Therapy* is intense, fragile, and introspective, the MC spilling verse over thumping beats, sweeping strings and acoustic guitar.

[myspace.com/speechdebellemusic](http://myspace.com/speechdebellemusic)



### Placebo For What It's Worth

Format Track **ETA** Out now **Price** £0.79

New album *Battle For The Sun* sees deviant rockers Placebo getting the horn in an unexpected way: it's got brass all over it, and single *For What It's Worth* mixes their trademarked grungy angst with blasts of saxophone. An odd fit, yes, but at least they're still up for a spot of experimentation. [myspace.com/placebo](http://myspace.com/placebo)



### Little Boots New In Town

Format Track **ETA** Out now **Price** £0.79

Electro-pop newcomer Victoria Hesketh takes on the chart. On the surface it's a big, glitzy bar-crawl soundtrack, all thumping electro and sass, but when she trills, "You never felt so far from home," there's a vulnerability Girls Aloud would beat up a toilet attendant for. [myspace.com/littlebootsmusic](http://myspace.com/littlebootsmusic)



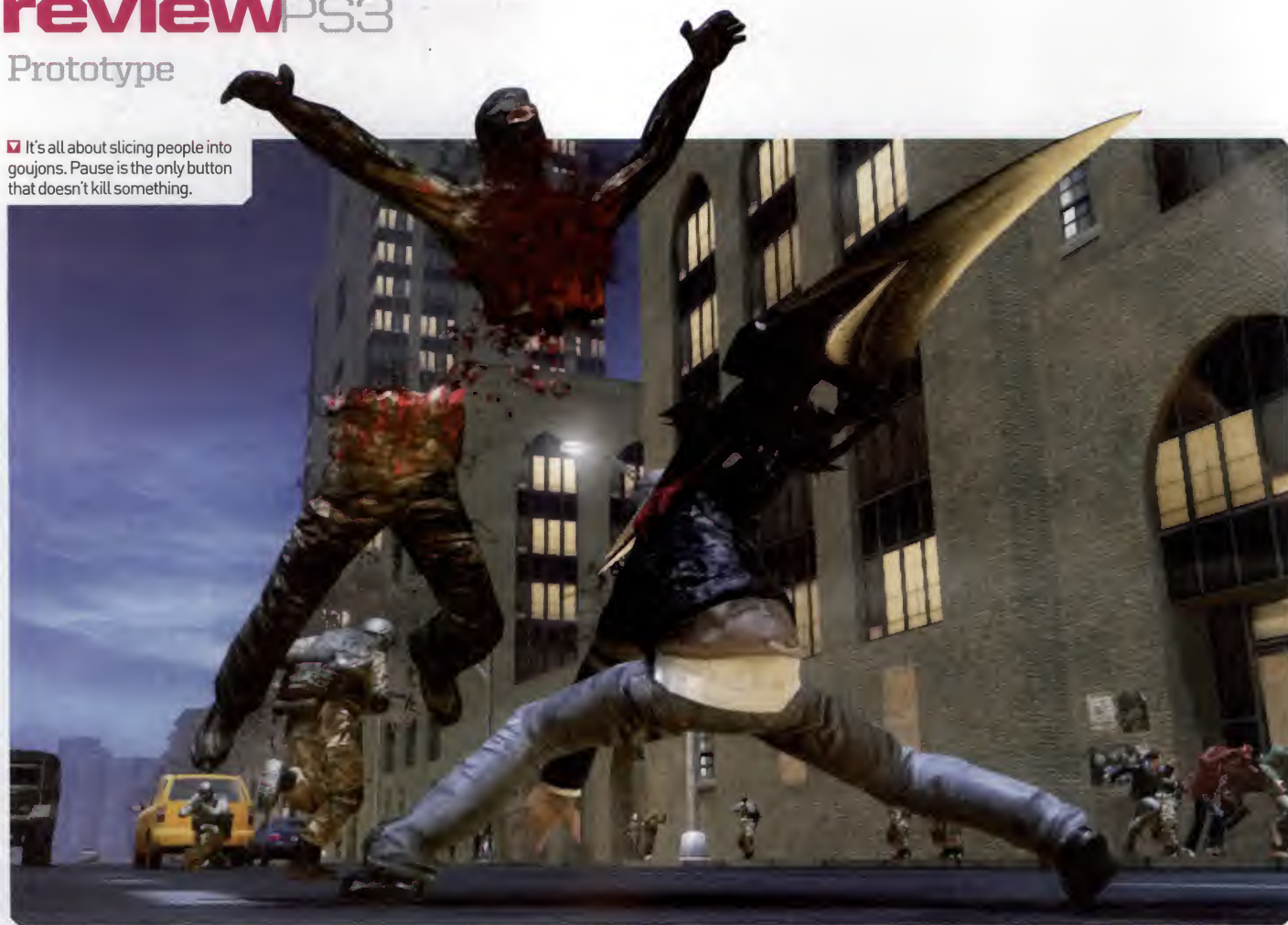
## Download of the month Phoenix Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix

Format Album **ETA** Out now **Price** £7.99

Phoenix grew out of the same Parisian suburb that spawned Air and Daft Punk, but where their peers turned to synths, this lot reached for guitars and drums. The result is pop music with a sweet tooth, a collection of love songs filled with primary colours. [myspace.com/wearephoenix](http://myspace.com/wearephoenix)

## Prototype

It's all about slicing people into goujons. Pause is the only button that doesn't kill something.



098

Slasher fiction

# Prototype

You wait for one moody, free-roaming, superhero to come along...

**Y**ou are going to kill a lot of people. You won't mean to, it'll just happen naturally along the way. Amnesiac mutant Alex Mercer's range of shape-shifting superpowers are mostly based on mimicking knives, and create the effect you might get if you strung piano wire across the road during the London Marathon. He's able to morph between a range of razor tentacles, blade arms, hammer fists and more, turning a street full of people, soldiers and monsters into chunky red marmalade within seconds. It's not so much a case of "will it blend?" but "how?"

### Flesh wounds

Unlike inFamous – Sucker Punch's rival superhero game which we scored 9/10 last month – there's no morality here. You are evil, end of. Consuming people is a vital part of the game, for example. Absorbing victims boosts health and gives you the ability to change into them,

**Like this?**  
Play these



**Assassin's Creed**

Stabbing his way through Crusades-era Holy Land, Altair is the athlete/killer.

**VERDICT 8**



**inFamous**

Lots of superpowers to upgrade and a huge city to climb and glide through. Plus here you get to choose if you want to be good or evil.

**VERDICT 9**

wearing their skins as a disguise. Like Kratos, your path is greased with the blood of the innocent and the guilty alike. That said, there's a huge satisfaction to the rippling effect as you morph into a harmless-looking girl seconds before the army appears, still looking for an armoured psychopathic mutant. Sucking up certain people also steals their memories which gradually build into the Web Of Intrigue, a collection of video clips that flesh out the back story.

Transmogrifying limbs aside, the real star power is your freedom to move. A mixture of superhuman free-running, jumps and gliding that makes getting about an incredibly liberating experience. You can run up the sides of buildings, leap from rooftops and fly (well, you fall eventually, but travel further than you do in inFamous) with incredible ease. From a standing start you can cover miles in a matter of seconds.

Manhattan is an amazing place to



### Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA** 12 June **Pub** Activision **Dev** Radical Ent

**Players** 1 **Web** Prototypegame.com **It's like** Putting a goldfish in a blender and waiting for someone to press the button.

explore as it slowly slides into the chaos of a viral outbreak. The streets are packed – some areas are calm, others are filled with rioting mobs as soldiers battle monsters amid throngs of screaming, fleeing people. And the anarchy rises as the story progresses, following Alex's attempt to uncover his and the virus' origins. It's occasionally a little rough visually, with repeating character models and simplistic damage effects, but it's a reasonable trade-off to create such swarming detail. The game might not glisten like GTA IV but it surges in a way Liberty City could never achieve. It's an experience simply to watch the apocalyptic anarchy unfold.

✓ The Specialist is a highly trained soldier sent after you.



✓ "On the right you can see the Chrysler building and on the left... OH MY GOD!"



The coolness of your movement-based powers is reflected in the fact that you *will* spend all the XP earned from missions and kills on locomotion upgrades. Faster sprint speed, higher jumps – once you've got a taste for tearing through the city on thrumming tiptoes you'll want more. It's irresistible. Elsewhere you can boost your already incomparable lethality with more attacks and combos. Like your ability to move, combat gives you an incredible sense of freedom – you can hack, slash, spear and garrote, hijack tanks and helicopters, throw cars, or steal guns and RPGs. Although for comedy value the 'Patsy' skill is unbeatable – a trick enabling you to point at a soldier and shout "It's him!" Then join in as every military unit in range blows him into pink mist.

## Nice moves

The near limitless options actually create a problem. Quickly you become too powerful, and it's clear that developer Radical Entertainment struggled to balance this. The story starts with a promising variety:

excellent chase missions and tense stealth, say. But later goals involve sterner tests like attacking army bases or tricky-to-kill monsters, and these can descend into a fumbling, desperate button-mash against overwhelming odds. If you're not being laid into from all sides by a mass of soldiers, tanks and choppers then you're beset by four or five massive beasts with unblockable attacks. Sometimes, both.

For the most part, however, this is hugely entertaining. It's the gristly entertainment of nightmares, admittedly, but fun nonetheless. As well as the main story there are brilliant side missions, a range of challenges mostly based on combat, and agility skills, which constantly push your mastery of Alex's abilities. And there's huge enjoyment to be had just by inciting chaos for kicks (try changing shape in a quiet street and watch the terror spread through the crowd). This is one of best

superhero experiences yet – maybe not quite the equal of *inFamous*, but a genuine alternative for the inner maniac in you.

Leon Hurley



# JapanWatch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell

## Zettai Zetsumei Toshi 3

Format PSP Pub Irem Subtitles No

I like a good disaster survival game, – and this one – including network co-op – is more intriguing than most. That said, given that the global economy is in free fall and swine flu is gripping the planet with a pestilent trotter, arguably the biggest game of survival these days is just outside the front door.

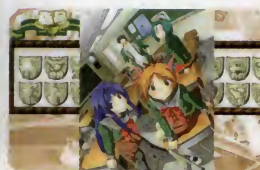


## 12Riven The Psi-Criminal Of Integral

Format PSP Pub Cyber Front Subtitles No

Try not to judge the typo. If you were making an impossibly complex text adventure featuring a high school student out to rescue a girl from murder at the hands of a powerful psychic, you'd gloss over small stuff – like *correctly spelling the title of the game*.

099



## Hoshigari Empusa Portable

Format PSP Pub Takuyo Subtitles No

If, like me, you've often wondered why nobody has previously thought to combine the turn-based real-estate acquisition of *Monopoly* with a dating sim set around student politics in a Japanese high school, then there's a very good chance you're chronically wasting your life too. Could be worse, though: you could have spent two years developing this.

## Exotic Boxart Of The Month



### Hakushaku to Yusei

This gnm boxart accurately acknowledges the fact that, before 1868, the world only had eight colours, six of which were brown.



### Sengoku Tenka Touitsu

An image that perfectly captures the exact moment the heroine of this period adventure realises why her fiancé spends so much time at the local sauna.



### Will O' Wisp Portable

It doesn't take a forensic genius to figure out that the guy whose funeral these androgynes are attending probably died from hairspray inhalation.

❑ Masochists can replay the game, and all its bosses, with New Game +.



Torture dungeon

# Demon's Souls

Evil dungeon-crawler requires the patience of a saint

**Info**  
**Format** PS3 **ETA** Japan import  
**Pub** Sony **Dev** From Software  
**Players** 1-3 **Web** [jp.playstation.com/scei/title/demons-souls](http://jp.playstation.com/scei/title/demons-souls) **It's like**  
 Really, really difficult, man.

**D**emon's Souls is difficult. Really, really difficult. It's so difficult it won't even let you pause the game. But it's also one of the most interesting things on PS3. Which doesn't necessarily mean that it's the most entertaining, or the most fun. In fact, in many ways, it's exactly the opposite: it's an old-fashioned dungeon crawler – slow and laborious, savage and brutal – with an equally old-fashioned backstory [city shrouded in fog, heroes marching to their doom, mysterious evil and so on]. But it's also unique in the way it combines a bewilderingly intricate game system, which hides a ton of secrets, with a truly original approach to online play: players are able to collaborate and share info in their attempt to overcome a gruelling, diamond-hard single-player game.

## Bosslist

### First test



#### Vanguard

Your first boss will most likely kill you with a single swing of his giant axe.

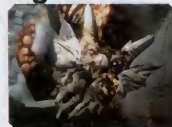
### Middle order



#### Red Dragon

Get a bow and 100 arrows, and take him out from a tower in Boletarian Palace.

### Big hitter



#### Tower Knight

He's tough, but upgrade your weapons and pick him off from the battlements.

Hell, even the tutorial is difficult. After a short preamble, learning a few moves to help you on your quest – which, unsurprisingly, involves slaying demons to collect their souls – you turn round a corner, run into your first boss, and die. That's just a hint of things to come, and the first of a succession of oversized enemies capable of sending you to your doom with just a single blow. Other interesting ways to die include sudden-death drops, exploding barrels, pits of lava and even snoozing dragons, who snuff you out with a single nonchalant flick of their tail.

## Soul purpose

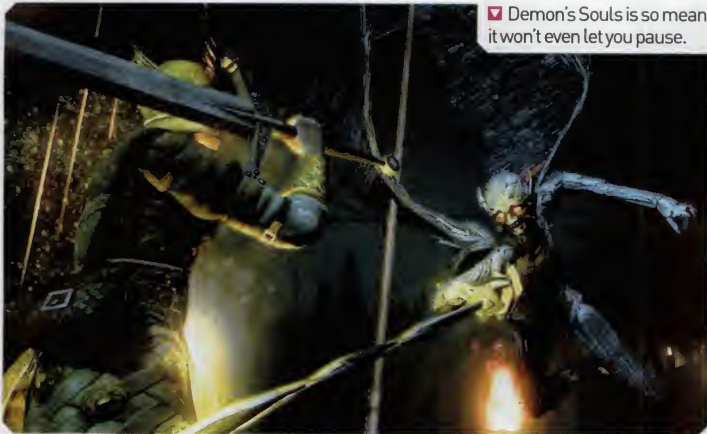
This is a game that will have you grinding through difficult bits, replaying levels again and again, because there's no real death here. Instead, every time you die, you're sent back to the start of the level in Soul Form, with half your hit points, minus any souls you've picked up. Which brings us on to the other difficult thing about Demon's Souls: working out how the game system works and how to use

the souls you've picked up by killing enemies. You can use them to repair or upgrade your weapons and armour; swap them for new items, like healing herbs or ammo; and, most importantly, use them to increase your character level and enhance your attributes.

Juggling all that requires a lot of thought, but do it well and you can tailor yourself to whatever playing style you prefer – stealth, aggression, magic, miracles, ranged combat, whatever. Even then, you need to work out how your character and the game world can shift in 'tendency' from black (bad), to white (good), triggering all sorts of different



❑ As you play, other gamers appear as ghostly images, adding brilliantly to the spooky vibe.



✓ Demon's Souls is so mean it won't even let you pause.



▲ It might look like standard fantasy fare, but Demon's Souls' online element is inventive.

events. And on top of all that, you need to work out the multiplayer.

## Slay together

Essentially, the way the multiplayer works is that you're online all the time. So when you're playing through the single-player game, other gamers appear as ghostly images (enhancing the magnificent gothic atmosphere). If you acquire a certain item, however, you can cause havoc for other players by invading their game as a dreaded Black Phantom – and they can do the same to you.

The tone of the game, however, is really one of collaboration. That's partly because another in-game item enables you to invite other players into your game to help you out. But more importantly, it's down to just about the most inventive use of PS3's networking capabilities yet: everybody playing through Demon's Souls in single-player can leave messages that can be seen by every other player in their own single-player game. It's like an in-game

wiki, with messages (taken from a comprehensive pre-selected list) appearing as glowing red graffiti in the game. What's more, whenever another player dies during their campaign, they leave a pool of blood in your game, which you can then touch to trigger another ghostly image of their death, which makes for a useful in-game hint system.

And of course, that sense of collaboration – of a community of people coming together to take on this imposing challenge – wouldn't exist were it not for the intricacies of the game system, and the even more daunting sense of difficulty. So while it's not a game that everyone will enjoy, it's certainly a unique experience. When a game is this unkind, this abusive, and yet still finds you sitting up into the early hours of the morning, trying to come

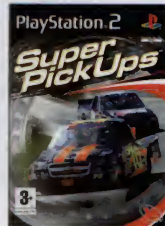
up with a new strategy for a section that you've just failed 15 times in a row, there's got to be something a little bit special about it.

David McCarthy



## Straight to bargain bin

With Nathan Ditum



The last time I played a game called **Super Pick Ups** I was at university and everyone thought I'd won, only it turned out my winning score was actually a bloke, so I lost all my points and spent the rest of the night puking and washing my hands. This Super Pick Ups isn't like that, it's about grids of identically modelled utility vans being raced around dull city tracks. When I was playing, I imagined they all had corpses nestled under the tarpaulin in the back, and they were speeding to find the best hidden burial spots. That got depressing after a while, and then the fact that one of the fake race teams is called Podmaxx cheered me up. Then I stopped playing. Not recommended, if that wasn't already clear.

Full disclosure: I didn't play very much of **CID: The Dummy**. Enough to know I hate it, and to briefly consider entering it into the new version of the bible I'm working on (called Disco And Other Revelations) under 'Abominations'. But not as much as I would normally play when looking to give an overall impression of a game. Because here, I'm happy to be very specific: the voice acting in CID is worse than the pretend radio shows my six-year-old son makes up. It's just a squawking high-pitched idiot mess and, coupled with wretched 2.5D gameplay and animation that would make a cave painting blush, it was clear within minutes the only happiness I'd ever snatch from the stupid thing would be in turning it off immediately.



Top of the idiot pile this month is **Monster Jam: Urban Assault**. Being the best game in this column is a bit like being the least virulent disease in a Petri dish, or the most temperate of all nuclear blast zones. The hollowest of victories, then, which in this instance is brought on by the sort of unmanageably slidey handling you'd never expect to find outside a canoe careening suicidally down a ski jump. Despite each weighing more than a house and having mammoth ridged rubber tyres which should give you more traction than God, the trucks spin into walls on the spot and turn ends-up in a gentle breeze. It's dreadful, but aside from the basic unplayability, also quite likeable – I raced mostly with a giant monster truck that was dressed like a dog, with big ears that flapped backwards when I launched into high jump. And I like dogs, so, good.

## Abomination of the month

Whether it's due to the fact Sony stopped vetting PS2 games for quality or just cosmic ineptitude, **Real Madrid: The Game** is literally unplayable. Rather than the traditional representation of football through a continuous flow of men running and kicking a ball, this is a mess of unconnected one or two-second cut-scenes (ugly like a run-over dog), most of which you don't control. It's baffling – a member of your team will shoot, then a massive Real emblem will flash up and there'll be an animation of him getting tackled *even though he no longer has the ball*, before the other team scores, apparently from their half. Occasionally you're prompted to pass or run, but the only button you'll actually need is 'off'. Proper broken cock.



❑ You need grenades or rockets to take them out. Bullets just tickle.



Crynet

# Terminator Salvation

Killer robots and us are done professionally

This is a warning from the future. A warning that if we allow advances in toaster technology to continue unchecked they'll become self-aware and nuke us. It is also a warning that no matter how good the source material is, all movie games are doomed to fail.

You play rebel leader John Connor, on a mission to rescue survivors trapped behind Skynet lines. First problem: terminators are in short supply (except in the loading screen, which in an over-promising masterstroke is the best bit of the game). Then, when they finally show up, it's a big disappointment. Gone are the efficient killers of the films, replaced by clanging tin men bumping into each other on the battlefield like someone's spilled coffee on their collision detection



### Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Warner Bros **Dev** Grin **Players** 1-2 **Web** [terminator.salvationthegame.com](http://terminator.salvationthegame.com) **It's like** The machines have turned on us already, starting with PS3.

circuits. There are two main kinds: shiny metal skeletons and singed Arnie-style 'skin jobs'. Both varieties are bullet sponges, but given their habit of standing still while you pump them full of rounds, they pose less of a threat than digging crusts out of your toaster with a fork.

### Metal mickey

The game mostly consists of busywork, shooting hundreds of flying Aerostats, crawly Spider bots and killer motorbikes. The routine goes: run from tiny area to tiny area, wait for a queue of robots to form, shoot, skip to a cut-scene, repeat. Combat is slow and painful, mostly because the guns are crazy dull. Apparently, even in 2016, weapons haven't advanced beyond the standard issue grenade launchers, shotguns and machine guns used in the Falklands. And only the heavy artillery will make a dent in bigger enemies. Anything else, even repeated shotgun fire to the terminators' glowing red weak spots, will just annoy them. The cover system shows a tiny twinkle of originality – click the left stick and you'll get an icon giving you options to

do a fancy slide to the next safe point – but it's the silver lining to a dark cloud.

There is a plodding attempt to add variety through some vehicle missions, but they're invariably awful. One has you shooting motorbikes from the back of a moving subway train with a rocket launcher, which sounds amazing but actually means struggling to hit the fastest enemy with the slowest-loading

### What you do in... Terminator



**Name** James Jarvis  
**Angle** Salvation survivor

"The best thing about Terminator is the cover system. But that's no surprise since this – along with everything else – seems to have been borrowed from Grin's other movie tie-in Wanted: Weapons Of Fate. It's like your dad covering your old BMX in Dulux and then claiming it's a mountain bike. There's really nothing here to keep you entertained, and even Skynet and its army of robot murderers can't change that."

**Best for...**  
Proving robots won't rule the world

✓ However many Aerostats you kill, there are *always* more.



✗ "You must get this all the time, but did you play drone 187 in Resistance 2?"

weapon. That's then topped by an escort mission where you protect a school bus full of survivors with a mounted gun. A gun with such limited movement the whole thing barely qualifies as a shooting gallery.

And Christian Bale is nowhere to be seen. Instead you get generic goons and busty chicks who clearly can't get kevlar vests in the future as they're all wearing battle-grade Wonderbras. Plastic facial animation means they struggle to register emotion, except for surprise when they see the enemy. "Skynet!" screamed my brunette companion as security drones descended for the billionth time. Considering we were storming the Skynet compound, this was hardly a revelation. The rest of the shouting is mainly about flanking in battle, though your team never seem to actually try it.

Replacing the AI with a friend doesn't help, either. There's nothing that compares to the frantic squabbling and rescuing of Resi 5, just monotonous, trigger-squeezing sadness. Offline, the two-man co-op chops the screen into two ugly

little letterboxes, making it a strain to see what you're doing. And even though the sections of the single-player campaign are open in co-op, the only advantage to subjecting a friend to this horror is that they can revive you. More than anything, do you really want a mate knowing you've spent actual money on this?

Terminator Salvation has had little love given to it. And, like any abused animal, it occasionally lashes out. Sometimes cover simply won't stop the bullets, leaving you open to any attack. Pipe bombs often don't register when you walk over them, meaning you can't pick them up no matter what you do. At other times it takes linearity to new extremes, ending the game because you've apparently left the battlefield, even though you're eye-to-scary-red-eye with the enemy. Even if you weren't trying to leave, you'd bloody well try

after you've been forced to replay the whole section thanks to an invisible boundary. Best way to avoid that scenario? Don't venture on to the battlefield at all.

**Rachel Penny**



## BluMovies

HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



### The Spirit

Director Frank Miller Starring

Gabriel Macht, Samuel L. Jackson **ETA** Out now

The sexy Sin City-style visuals aside, this is just plain weird. Undead vigilante cop Denny Colt is recklessly ripped from the pages of Will Eisner's ace comic and made tedious and unlikeable. It's stylish, yes, but it's also seriously lacking in substance, and the super hammy acting ruins any sense of involvement with the story. Bad move, Sammy L.

### Slumdog Millionaire

Director Danny Boyle Starring

Dev Patel, Anil Kapoor **ETA** Out now

Romantic fable told through the grim but energetic streets of Mumbai, and the weird narrative hook of Who Wants To Be A Millionaire. Director Danny Boyle (Trainspotting) clashes gameshow glamour with the desperate poverty of slum survivor Jamal, with glorious results. Win.



### Bolt

Director Byron Howard, Chris Williams

Starring John Travolta, Miley Cyrus **ETA** 15 June

It's a simple tale: dog gets separated from owner, dog then tries to find owner, dog finds out the superpowers it thought were real are all faked for TV. So, he's a bit like Buzz Lightyear, then, and though it doesn't quite have Toy Story's charm, Bolt does have a super cute puppy coupled with tons of laughs and action.



### Movie of the month The Wrestler

Director Darren Aronofsky Starring Jason Statham, Natalya Rudakova **ETA** Out now

Pro-wrestler Randy 'The Ram' Robinson is an old bear swiping at life with blunt claws, trying to come to terms with the end of his ring career. The performance is painfully honest, and though a knife-twisting estranged daughter subplot is hackneyed, the 'what now?' relationship with Tomei's stripper is, like the rest of the film, raw and touching.






Beautiful garbage


# Trash Panic

Japan calls it Gomibako, we call it brilliant








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**Info**  
Format PSN download ETA Out now  
Pub Sony Dev SCE Studios Japan  
Players 1-2 Web uk.playstation.com  
It's like Revelling in a new life as a  
destructive Japanese binman.

Chances are you've never walked into your local, taken stock of the furniture, then planned out how you're going to strategically dismantle the place: "Drop all the empties into a big blue bin. Then sling a couple of tables on top, crushing the bottles. Then break up the tables by dropping the three-seater sofa on them..." This, however, will be your future once you've become hooked on Trash Panic. Whether you're in the pub, living room, office... even in your sleep. Lose the frown. It's completely worth it.

### Rubbish tips

In crude terms, this puzzler is Tetris imbued with the spirit of Katamari. Your field of play is a giant blue bin, above which objects continually appear, which can then be rotated with , dropped hard with , or placed down gently using . In the workplace setting of the first level these objects range from pencils and light bulbs to sponges and



Russian dolls; but by the time you've reached the fifth and final level, you're dropping mountains and oil fields onto tankers and baseball diamonds. It's brilliantly absurd.

Your objective is to break up all this trash by whatever means possible. As well as giving thought to where you drop items, your strategy has to take into account the size and shape of every item before unleashing it. Drop a sponge on a safe and it'll do nothing. Wham a dumbbell onto a bottle of perfume and the latter will shatter instantly. Weighing up what breaks against what – and how – is the key to keeping your giant dustbin in order. The physics are such that every item breaks realistically, and there's as much satisfaction to be had in smashing up a giant clump of scrap as there is in scoring a Tetris or clearing the screen in Lumines. It really is that good.

Adding to the chaos are flammable items like toilet rolls, dynamite and even propane tanks. Dropping a lit match onto something combustible then closing the lid () to lower the oxygen level is so satisfying, you'll start to wonder if your teenage pyromania experiments



▲ Fail to rescue special 'Mottainai' objects and extra trash, like these balls, will fall in your bin.



▲ The most satisfying way of clearing trash is to set it alight, then close the lid. Burn, baby, burn!



behind the old cricket pavilion really were 'just a phase'. Then there are decomposition balls that disintegrate adjacent trash when in contact with water; and special items called Mottainai that you need to manoeuvre to the bottom of your bin for a small creature called Gomy to collect. Destroy a Mottainai and a load of awkward objects will land in your bin, making it more likely that an item will spill overboard. Lose three items and it's game over.

Five levels may sound a little on the short side, but even after finishing the game twice I was still constantly drawn back to it – the acid test of any classic puzzler. There's also a versus mode where two cans are placed side by side and, as you successfully crush or burn rubbish, your can is raised upwards. The first to reach the top of the screen has the contents of his or her can tipped on top of their competitor's, and the first to drop an item is the loser. It's

funny, competitive stuff, and completes this tidy £3.99 package. Superb value, and it will also soften the blow of taking a job in refuse management if this recession gets any worse. **Ben Wilson**





Knee-scraper

# SBK 09 Superbike World Championship

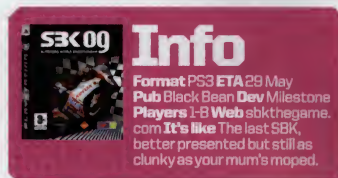
Fast bikes load slow...

This is Milestone's third SBK game in as many years, and by far the best. But SBK 09's glory moments are still too tangled up in a fumbled, cumbersome design for it to really shine – it feels like you spend just as much time eyeballing humdrum messages about 'accessing content' as you do actually racing.

But let's assume you actually make it to one of the attractively modelled, if rather boxily decorated, circuits on offer. SBK captures the sense of a 200bhp+ motorcycle better than any other game, so slides, death-wobbles, wheelspin, inadvertent wheelies and sudden accidents are all just an impatient tweak of the throttle away. The sound is spot on too – thrash Ben Spies' Yamaha R1 and it sounds every bit as frantically nuts as the real thing, while the booming Ducatis are super chunky.

## Tuner manoeuvre

There are plenty of tuning options – if you've ever wanted to tension a chain but just couldn't admit it, now's your chance – and the tweaks really work. This is good, because the default bikes could be out-turned by fat twins in a double-buggy. They're distressingly hard to flick about, and that lack of manoeuvrability is the



▲ Start at the back of the grid, try to control your bike, finish at the back of the grid. Repeat.

game's biggest challenge. It's vital to steepen up the steering if you want to go fast, but good luck with the help text – it's gibberish.

Sadly, a proper race (Quick Race has no tuning) involves a multiplicity of poorly-explained practice, warm-up and qualifying sessions. It takes five minutes just to skip these and reach the race. Why is the whole track reloaded each time? And why can't certain things, such as traction control, be adjusted without quitting and starting again?

There's a good and brilliantly fast bike sim in here, based on a resurgent series. It's sad, then, that SBK-09's overall implementation pushes your patience instead of your PS3.

Steve Williams



## Release Schedule

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you

|                                        | Publisher    | ETA    | Format  |
|----------------------------------------|--------------|--------|---------|
| Prototype                              | Activision   | 12 Jun | PS3     |
| Red Faction Guerrilla                  | THQ          | 12 Jun | PS3     |
| Ghostbusters                           | Atari        | 19 Jun | Multi   |
| Supercars: V-8 Racing                  | Black Bean   | 19 Jun | PS3     |
| Fight Night Round 4                    | EA           | 26 Jun | PS3     |
| Guitar Hero: Greatest Hits             | Activision   | 26 Jun | PS3/PS2 |
| Overlord II                            | Codemasters  | 26 Jun | PS3     |
| Transformers: Rise Of The Fallen       | Activision   | 26 Jun | PS3     |
| Wolfenstein                            | Activision   | Jun    | PS3     |
| Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood         | Ubisoft      | 3 Jul  | PS3     |
| Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince | EA           | 3 Jul  | PS3     |
| Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10                | EA           | 3 Jul  | Multi   |
| Cross Edge                             | Koei         | 10 Jul | PS3     |
| King Of Fighters XII                   | Ignition     | 16 Jul | PS3     |
| Dark Void                              | Capcom       | Jul    | PS3     |
| Ride To Hell                           | Deep Silver  | Jul    | PS3     |
| Watchmen: The End Is Nigh Ep 2         | Warner Bros  | Jul    | PSN     |
| Madden NFL 10                          | EA           | 14 Aug | Multi   |
| GI Joe: The Rise Of Cobra              | EA           | Aug    | Multi   |
| Mini Ninjas                            | Eidos        | Aug    | PS3     |
| Rock Band: Beatles                     | EA           | 9 Sep  | PS3     |
| Batman: Arkham Asylum                  | Eidos        | Sep    | PS3     |
| Dissidia: Final Fantasy                | Square Enix  | Sep    | PSP     |
| FIFA 10                                | EA           | Sep    | PS3     |
| Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs      | Ubisoft      | Sep    | PS3/PSP |
| Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier      | Sony         | Sep    | PS2/PSP |
| Just Cause 2                           | Eidos        | Sep    | PS3     |
| Need For Speed Shift                   | EA           | Sep    | PS3/PS2 |
| Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising  | Codemasters  | Sep    | PS3     |
| Singularity                            | Activision   | Sep    | PS3     |
| Brutal Legend                          | EA           | 16 Oct | PS3     |
| I Am Alive                             | Ubisoft      | Oct    | PS3     |
| Uncharted 2: Among Thieves             | Sony         | Oct    | PS3     |
| Bioshock 2                             | Take Two     | Nov    | PS3     |
| Mafia II                               | Take Two     | Nov    | PS3     |
| Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time       | Sony         | Nov    | PS3     |
| Red Dead Redemption                    | Rockstar     | Nov    | PS3     |
| Dead To Rights: Retribution            | Namco Bandai | Dec    | PS3     |
| Battlefield: Bad Company 2             | EA           | Dec    | PS3     |
| Gran Turismo 5                         | Sony         | Dec    | PS3     |
| White Knight Chronicles                | Sony         | Dec    | PS3     |
| Final Fantasy XIII                     | Square Enix  | 2010   | PS3     |
| God Of War III                         | Sony         | 2010   | PS3     |

! All release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to change.



READY MADE EXCUSE #32

Pull a sickie for...  
Call Of Juarez

“Just two instances of minor affray and the bus company have refused to let me travel. I've literally got no other way of getting to work...”

”



Slay together

# Resident Evil 5

Horror has a new name, and it's 'premium content'



## Info

**Format** PS3 **ETA** Out now **Pub** Capcom **Dev** Capcom **Multiplayer** 1-4 **Web** residentevil.com **It's like** Playing split-screen co-op having been cured of tunnel vision.

**T**here are three online modes in Resident Evil (four if you count staring at Sheva's bottom, which for official purposes we won't). Firstly, there's co-op, in which you and a friend soldier through the main story, sharing ammunition and hugging each other supportively when things start to go wrong. Then there's Mercenaries, in which you work together to save yourselves from waves of zombie-like Majini, earn lots and lots of points and win a holiday for two in the Costa Brava (it's tough, but keep trying). Finally, fresh from the spreadsheets of the Capcom Accounts Department, there's the new Versus mode, in which you essentially

stump up four quid to play Mercenaries against other people. Lovely.

Online co-op comes packaged as standard with Resi 5, and is a must if you're going to wrangle the most out of the game, especially at Veteran level. Impressive though Sheva's AI is during the single-player campaign, playing with a mate offers you more genuine options for teamwork ('you distract the giant spaghetti beast and mutant S&M lumberjack while I grab the green herb'), and there's a joy to arguing over shotgun shells and yelping at each other that the best programming routines could never replicate. Working out the invite system is a bit of a ballache, and having a chum to hold your hand makes the game feel even less scary than the already action-focused single-player, but this is still an ace extension of the main game.

you complete the game – and it's *really* good fun. It's classic arcade stuff, with you and a friend racking up points by frantically shooting Majini in a closed environment and stringing together kills for points combos. It's like the best bits of the campaign squeezed into a mode of their own.

Versus, on the other hand, *isn't* free – it costs £3.99 to download from the store – but it uses the same maps and general setup as Mercenaries with what amounts to a few rule changes. There are two main game types, Slayers and Survivor, and also team versions of both. Slayers is basically a competitive version of Mercenaries, where you [alone, or with a teammate against another pair] whack Majini for points, but this time with an emphasis not on survival but on out-scoring your opponents. It's a fun, if minor, addition.

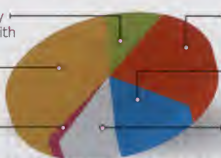
Survivor is a more substantial shift, and is basically a straight deathmatch mode. The big problem here is that the controls that make Resi 5 an effective

## What you do in... Resi 5

**9%** Eating more greenery than even Dr Gillian McKeith would deem sensible.

**40%** Cursing the lack of 'move and shoot' training at the STARS.

**2%** Jumping across platforms and climbing ladders. Really slowly.



**28%** Screaming at your partner like a baby 'SHOOT IT SHOOT IT SHOOT IT!'

**12%** Getting shot in the face while rummaging around in your inventory.

**9%** Entering a Mexican standoff and realising the other guy has a shotgun. 'Oh!'

## Monster mash

Mercenaries and Versus modes are where things get a little tangled. Mercenaries is free – it's unlocked when



✓ Another hastily booked holiday ends badly for Jill.



■ Wesker is tough like a robot killer from the future and wears a sexy goth romper suit.

survival horror make it a poor shooter. It feels sluggish. You can't strafe, or reload while moving, and when you access the inventory your character will stop and peer thoughtfully into their knapsack like an old lady at the supermarket scratching around in her handbag for a bit of change.

### Fist fight

And don't expect to pop off your foes with one slick headshot – Resi 5 characters are tougher than God. Given that you can't shoot and move simultaneously, fights often end with players standing face to face, unloading countless rounds into each other before the character with the most powerful weapon can finish off his rival by chinning them, of all things. So if you're using anvil-faced sourpuss Chris Redfield and your opponent has unlocked the mighty Wesker, expect to eat bullets for tea and thunderous fists for pudding.

The team variants don't improve things either,

mostly because the controls make working in tandem extremely frustrating. The position of your comrade is shown onscreen, and holding **[L1]** will focus on their location, but in a game that makes opening doors difficult, getting there isn't always straightforward.

When playing with strangers I often found myself bumping into my battle buddy completely by accident, like the chance meeting at the start of a hugely violent romcom. When you finally get the opportunity to work co-operatively it's satisfyingly demented, but actually getting to that point is a trial.

In sum, Resident Evil 5's best online modes come free with the game, and are definitely worth a look. The downloadable content not only represents dubious (read: laughable) value for money, but also requires you to use the game's 'unique' controls in ways that are frustrating, making it like trying to complete a Rubik's Cube using your tongue.

**Matt Elliott**



## Online round-up

With **Leon Hurley**



It all started so well. Me and a mate tackling the co-op Soviet campaign in **Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3**. It was cold, clinical and business-like. In my head we were hunched over a table, moving pieces around. Phrases like "take the flank, I'll cover from the ridge" were thrown about wildly. Goddam it, we sounded like *men*! Even the fact that one of our units was a sexy girl sniper in leather hot pants couldn't break the illusion of commanding a frontline. No, I think that moment came when I squeaked "send in the war bears!" in a panicky voice as the enemy steamrolled our forces off the map with a surprise attack from psychic schoolgirls. It's always the way.

There's a sickness to the **Fat Princess** beta. A sweet, sugary sickness laced with the blood of the fallen. It might look cutesy, but there's gore everywhere with claret splashed over the screen like prime era Jackson Pollack. Gameplay-wise it's basically CTF, where the flag is a bun-chomping princess. Feed her up and she'll be heavier and harder for the enemy to steal. Shame no one really got that part, though, as while I was playing everyone just met up in the middle to leather the crap out of each others' rosy little cheeks. While, from the dungeons, forgotten royalty yelled "FEED ME CAKE!"



I wasn't expecting much from **FEAR 2**. But that was before I impaled a man through the face with the Hammerhead and left him swinging gently from a door. Hello new favourite weapon. It's basically a combat-issue nail gun and words cannot describe how satisfying it is. Then there's the pulse weapon, which reduces anyone in front of you to a charred skeleton. And the laser which sets people on fire – gently, while they're still alive. I'd meant to check out the Toy Soldier Map Pack DLC – a giant sand pit, pinball table and lab to run around in like a well-armed Borrower – but I was just too busy nailing people to things and burning the corpses... Wait, that might sound wrong out of context.

## Download of the month

The real question with **Worms** is not which weapons or tactics to use but rather, how long to stay in an online game once all your men are finished. Should you be polite and wait for everyone else, or just high-tail it out of there? It's a bit like how long should you hug a girl after... Anyway, the point is every time I've played I've started last, which means my four-worm team has been savaged by three teams' worth of air strikes, exploding sheep, holy hand grenades (*Hallelujah!* BOOM!) before I can respond. So most of my matches are over very quickly. That leaves me laughing along politely while checking my watch and wondering how long before I can hit "Quit, are you sure? Yes" and begin the punishment again.



Driving offence

# Burnout Paradise Cops And Robbers

Trouble in paradise as gold rush begins

It feels weird criticising part of a game that, as a whole, we like very much. It's a little bit like objecting to that pretty but overpriced summer dress that your missus – who you're generally very happy with – wants you to pay for. Sort of. It's not that Cops And Robbers is *bad*, it's just that it's not good enough to warrant its fairly hefty £7.99 price tag.

## Swag bag

What do you get, then? 35 cars repainted in police themes – from a Met Police-style Land Rover to Mad Max-like interceptors – and a single online-only game mode, Cops And Robbers. This has teams of up to four racers competing for



## Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub EA Dev Criterion Players 1-8 Web [criteriongames.com](http://criteriongames.com) It's like Marked Man with some gold and a bunch of repainted cars.

a single stash of gold which spawns somewhere in Paradise City. Each team starts an equal distance from the gold, so as each round begins there's a balls-out dash to get to it first and drag it back to base to score points. The only complication is that carrying the gold slows you down, so once you've nabbed it you have to rely on your teammates to protect you from the enemy, who'll almost certainly catch you up on the lengthy ride home.

If it sounds a lot like the existing Marked Man mode, that's because it is. The gold and its easy-to-see mini-map marker make things more

accessible and easy to follow, but the nuts and bolts are identical, with the exception that there's no boost. This is presumably meant to put a greater emphasis on skilled driving and knowledge of the city's shortcuts, but it also makes it frustratingly hard to take people down, and given that Burnout without crashes is like football without goals, this is bad news.

After a year of outrageously generous updates delivered totally free of charge, Criterion seems to have slid too far back the other way – this is fun, but not eight quid fun. **Nathan Ditum**



Scoring takedowns without boost is a nightmare, even with the faster cars.



Metal mayhem

# Killzone 2 Steel And Titanium

Two new maps and... no, just two new maps



All I really care about is that it takes a million bullets to kill anyone online in Killzone 2. Your gun might sound like an oil drum full of hammers kicked down a fire escape but it's as lethal as a left-handful of cotton swabs. While we wait for a patch, the Steel And Titanium Map Pack at least offers two new levels not to kill people in.

Wasteland Bullet is the best – a speeding Helghast train roaring through



tunnels. The tight parallel carriages encourage exciting stand-offs with great potential for sneaking behind enemies. It also adds environmental hazards such as huge lights and metal beams whizzing past. Watching someone smashed out of the air by a massive pillar as they mistime a jump between trains is not something you forget in a hurry. It also makes sniping enormously risky, because the ideal high spots regularly have low-hanging roof structures to sweep away anyone who's careless enough not to be giving them their complete attention.

## Shipping news

The other map, Vekta Cruiser, is just as visually distinctive. It's a ruined ISA ship with holes torn in the side and flaming wreckage scattered around the walkways. It doesn't feel quite as balanced as the



## Info

Format PSN download ETA Out now Pub Sony Dev Guerrilla Games Players 1-32 Web [killzone.com](http://killzone.com) It's like You're on fire and someone's just given you an ice cream cone.

Wasteland Bullet, though. The asymmetrical design means most matches revolve around spawn camping the ISA side, so despite the maze of split-level catwalks most of the action takes place in a single room, fighting over one door.

Overall £4.79 feels pricey. Some games like Unreal Tournament III have given away free DLC with more content, and paid stuff, like the Call Of Duty: World

At War Map Pack 1, might cost a few quid extra but feels more substantial. What you get here is good but leans a little towards the 'sucky' side of our value for money meter.

**Leon Hurley**



Next month in...

# PlayStation®

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## Gran Turismo 5

The return of a PlayStation icon  
And we've got the full story



# PS3

## Essential collection

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far



### Platformer LittleBigPlanet

Unleash your inner Miyamoto by creating and sharing your own levels online using the brilliantly simple but canyon-deep editing tools in Sony's phenomenal platformer. Absolutely essential.

**10** Pub Sony  
Dev Media Molecule



### Shooter Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare

The SAS and US Marines invite you to fight the war on terror as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a modern-day setting. A beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.

**10** Pub Activision  
Dev Infinity Ward



### Action Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA – the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour – polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.

**10** Pub Rockstar Games  
Dev Rockstar North



### Stealth Metal Gear Solid 4 Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.

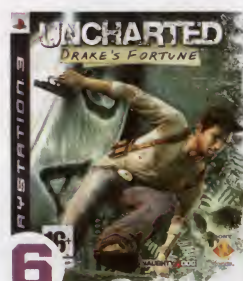
**10** Pub Konami  
Dev Konami Productions



### Platformer Bioshock

Epic first-person adventure set in a ruined underwater city that combines brilliant genetic weapons with beautiful design, tons of atmosphere, and a genuinely affecting story.

**10** Pub Take Two  
Dev 2K Marin



### Action-Adventure Uncharted Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and physical puzzling. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider.

**9** Pub Sony  
Dev Naughty Dog



### Shooter Killzone 2

Looks to die for, and endless waves of orange-eyed space Nazis aiming to ensure that's exactly what happens. Guerrilla's super-shooter is gritty, fierce and an utterly essential buy.

**9** Pub Sony  
Dev Guerrilla



### Fighter Street Fighter IV

Stunning return to form for the series, satisfying both the hardcore and newcomers like a particularly supple lady of the night. Lush visuals and sweet online play make this essential.

**9** Pub Capcom  
Dev Capcom



### Shooter Resistance 2

A sequel that masterfully surpasses the original. Nathan Hale returns to fight bigger aliens on American soil and delivers on gameplay, guns and polish.

**9** Pub Sony  
Dev Insomniac



### Platformer Ratchet & Clank Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.

**9** Pub Sony  
Dev Insomniac

## PS3 Imports

### Yakuza 3

Epic Tokyo crime saga, that's like GTA with noodles and orphans. Heavy on Japanese text, but otherwise a must-buy.

### MLB 09 The Show

Startlingly real visuals, custom in-stadium music and gameplay with oceanic depth.

### Civil War Secret Missions

Tragic American history shooter that collapsed on the basics of aiming and firing.

### Initial D Extreme Stage

Drift-obsessed arcade racer which, like Godzilla, is big in Japan.

## Team Choice



### FIFA 09

"I came back as a refresher for this issue's FIFA 10 feature, and stayed for the incredibly addictive online. Even with my steam-driven net connection it's almost lag-free, and so damned moreish I've lost whole evenings to it."

**Nathan Dittum**  
Reviews editor



### Power

Custom silicon harnesses crisp HD, ear-splitting audio, multi-processor might, and Blu-ray to deliver pure gaming perfection.

### Connectivity

USB slots to plug in your motion-sensing Sixaxis pads and many other devices.

### Online

Surf the net, message friends and download movies, music and expansion packs, plus demos and games from the PlayStation Store.



11

### Music SingStar

Sony's much-loved karaoke game steps up to next-gen with a neater interface, online options and tons of tunes via SingStore. Outkast's Hey Ya and The Killers' Mr Brightside are highlights.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev SCE Studios London



12

### Action-RPG Fallout 3

The natural successor to Oblivion's RPG throne plays out in a post-apocalyptic America with Liam Neeson as your AWOL dad. An epic adventure without the self-indulgent sprawl.

9 Pub Bethesda Softworks  
Dev Bethesda Game Studios



13

### Action inFamous

A big explosion tears Empire City to bits and gives hero Cole sparky superpowers in this sharp comic book adventure. Fluent climbing, frantic shooting and genuinely epic set-pieces make this a must-buy.

9 Pub Sony  
Dev Sucker Punch



14

### Sports FIFA 09

Impressively strong core gameplay on the pitch, ten-on-ten online matches and a new multiseason Be A Pro mode make this the top-scoring football choice on PS3.

9 Pub EA  
Dev EA Canada



15

### Shooter Far Cry 2

Dry, dusty, African sandbox run-and-gun action with an ace level editor. Not only do you have to avoid the bullets in your hunt for arms dealer The Jackal, there's malaria to deal with, too.

9 Pub Ubisoft  
Dev Ubisoft Montreal



16

### Racer Burnout Paradise The Ultimate Box

The best racer on PS3, now repackaged with tons of DLC and featuring motorbikes and night-time in addition to searingly fast racing. Simply beautiful.

9 Pub EA  
Dev Criterion Games



17

### Music Guitar Hero World Tour

Bigger, better, rockier. Battles are out, the set list is super strong, drums and vocals mean you don't need to wait for Rock Band 2, plus there's a studio too!

9 Pub Activision  
Dev Neversoft



18

### Racer Race Driver Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. Smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine-tuned cars combine to create the most satisfying racer yet on PS3.

9 Pub Codemasters  
Dev Codemasters



19

### Action Resident Evil 5

Horror classic swaps dark corners for the glare of the African sun to reveal the origins of the virus, and the new co-op mode is relationship-destroying magic. "You let them eat me!"

8 Pub Capcom  
Dev Capcom



20

### Action Dead Space

Interstellar survival horror that robs from Bioshock, Resident Evil 4 and Event Horizon, but gets away with it thanks to looking beautiful, playing brilliantly and delivering some very big scares.

8 Pub EA  
Dev EA Redwood Shores



### NCAA Football

The younger, college-aged companion to EA's long-standing Madden series. Huge in the States, tiny everywhere else.



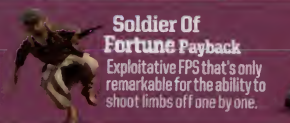
### White Knight Chronicles

Young boy meets enormous armoured warrior in this solid JRPG, coming to the UK.



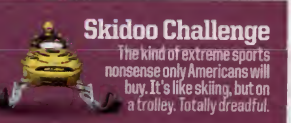
### Afrika

Go on safari and bother the beasts in Sony's soothingly non-violent photograph-'em-up.



### Soldier Of Fortune Payback

Exploitative FPS that's only remarkable for the ability to shoot limbs off one by one.



### Skidoo Challenge

The kind of extreme sports nonsense only Americans will buy. It's like skiing, but on a trolley. Totally dreadful.

# mail@opm



Dodgy poetry, government policy, gangsta warfare, old lady love and an unfortunate Killzone incident at work.

## Talking Japanese

I absolutely love Killzone 2's online multiplayer and was very excited when I learned a patch was getting released to sync our servers with Japan's. I asked a colleague of mine to help with a few translations. On my list were normal things like "Hello" and "My name is Fed", but also more relevant phrases like, "I need a medic," "Please heal me," and other words like sniper, ammunition and saboteur. All seems perfectly normal, right? Wrong. Earlier today I was called down to the boardroom to find my boss

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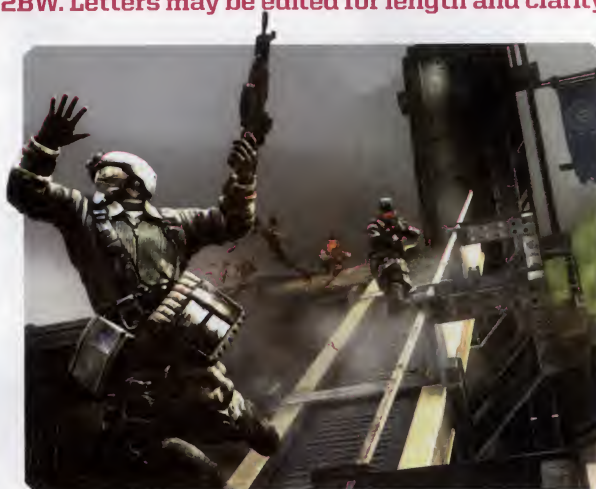
waiting for me with a member of our legal department.

My colleagues had become concerned about the translations and reported it. So there I was, sweating like crazy, being asked why I wanted to learn such unusual phrases. Of course, I did the only thing I could. I calmly explained it was so I could communicate with Japanese people while playing a game online.

My boss believed me instantly but the rep from legal wanted to test the validity of my story, and questioned me about Killzone to prove that I really had played the game. It was absolutely terrifying to know that my job hinged on my ability to explain the background story of Killzone. When I left that room, legal had been well briefed about the invasion of Vekta, the exploits of Jan Templar, the rescue of Evelyn Batton and the ISA's counter-invasion of Helghan. Everything turned out fine and I did get my list of Japanese translations. But I'm sure I'll be the butt of jokes at work for some time to come.

**Fehim Uddin**, by email

**Count yourself lucky. Our workplace is such a hotbed of mistrust and blame that we've each taken to compiling a blame file listing our colleagues' transgressions. We ran out of paper three weeks ago.**



▲ Terrify co-workers with Killzone 2 love.

Largely on the basis that we sympathise with anyone who has to explain the plot of Killzone in a pressure situation, your prize is a year's free subscription to this illustrious periodical. Enjoy it while it lasts.

## Saints above

What's wrong with people today? Why do I keep having to argue that Saints Row 2 is nowhere near as fun as GTA IV? How can people seriously have fun playing something with the depth of a spoon and the complexity of a breezeblock? This game has graphics I'd have called sub-par five years ago, characters less likeable than a thousand Jar Jars, no style and more gameplay mechanics than the biggest RPG. But do any of them satisfy for more than a nano-moment? No! They're about as underdeveloped as the animations or the physics system.

Oh, and the story? Worse than Indy 4! A douche bag escapes from prison because he doesn't like it, despite the fact that he clearly belongs there, uses his dodgy accent to recruit more douche bags, kills lots of people who don't deserve it and eventually becomes king of the douche bags. It all has this insipid 'gangsta' veneer about it that's about as authentic as a white kid with two hats and his jeans around his knees. Are these the

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Text 'Letters' then your message to 87474 - we'll include the best txts in the mag innit!\*



Tell us what's on your hard drive!  
Email us at [opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)

## What's on my hard drive



**Jay Reynolds**  
By email

### Music

Lots of Kings Of Leon, The Killers, The Beep Seals and other stuff like them.

### Photo

Some mugshots from Burnout Paradise and a collection of my holiday snaps.



### Video

A few I made on the PlayStation Eye and some Pixar shorts.

### Game

LittleBigPlanet, Burnout Paradise, Motorstorm: Pacific Rift and a few more.

### Friends

Most of my school mates and random ones from LBP, Burnout and The Orange Box.

heroes and sagas of my generation? We're all screwed! OPM, you remain valiant soldiers in the ongoing war against bilge like this!

**Iain Chambers**, by email

And to think we were worried that Nathan's spirited defence of our Saints Row 2 score last month (it got a controversial at the time 5/10) might have been 'too strong'.

## Shock therapy

I've completed the long, wonderful task that is Bioshock for the second time, no vita chambers, on hard, and won a handful of new Trophies. This has been one of the most completely immersive games I've ever played. Now it's over, I'm left feeling something is missing in my life. I've got to thank you for your brilliant feature a few months back on the sequel, and I'm begging for a recommendation of something with the same degree of finesse – a world I can sink into, but also an FPS. What would you play next? I'm at a loss, and not even Ratchet & Clank can pull me out of my mourning.

**Jamie Harrison**, by email

Ah, the bittersweet joy of finishing a game. If you want another immersive world in which everything's gone a bit apocalypse-shaped, try *Fallout 3* or *inFamous*. Both games feature richly detailed worlds to explore and genuinely gripping stories.

## Poet's corner

I like to play FPS on my PS3, I love to shoot the bad guys, I do it gleefully. And when I get promoted, with all the battles won. Everybody cheers and shouts PlaystaSHUN!

**Paul Defriend**, by email

Just because we gave the star letter to a poem last month doesn't mean we're a soft touch when it comes to verse. Your effort isn't a total disaster, Paul, but 'PlaystaSHUN'? Really?

## Talking sense

The article in May's edition of OPM regarding apparent links between videogaming and ill health raised many interesting points. However, as usual, the Government are searching for an entertainment format to blame everything on, and



## Ask SONY

**Q** When I plug my flash drive into my PS3 console it doesn't recognise it at all. What am I doing wrong?

**A** Make sure your flash drive is formatted correctly. It must be set to the FAT32 format for it to work with your PS3.

❑ Hurry along Big Sister, we need you!

games have taken the brunt again. It's irrational to blame the prolonged use of consoles for health problems children suffer. If children are eating unhealthily while playing games, they will gain weight. But if a child is eating a plate of vegetables and wiping out enemies on Killzone, would he still get fat?

Also, forcing children to take exercise won't work. There are more dangers on the streets than ever and children are safer if they're at home playing videogames. The powers that be must recognise that we're now in a digital age, and that the PlayStation Generation will make their own choices about how they derive their entertainment and fun.

**Philip West**, by email

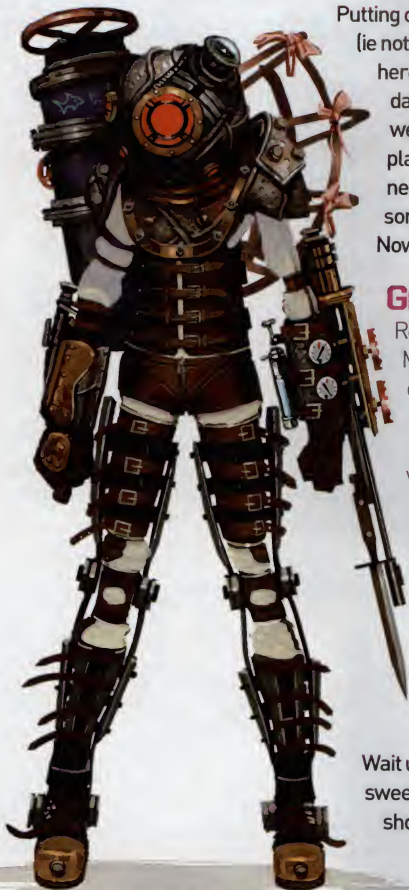
Putting our sensible hat on for a second (ie not the red Fatal Fury one) the key here is balance. Playing games all day doesn't do anyone good, as we discovered recently. All of us play sport, swim or, erm, knit. Kids need a varied range of activities, some of which ought to be outdoors. Now then, who ordered the mittens?

## Grey matter

Reading your In The Mood For... Musicians I noticed you missed one very good one – Agatha from *Fallout 3*! Not only does she send you to a Vault for a vintage violin but you can also use the lady killer perk on her to get some free ammo! Nothing creeped me out more than flirting outrageously with a 70-year-old woman. An experience I'm hoping never to repeat again!

**Ryan Robertson**, email

Wait until you're 80, she'll seem like a sweet piece of tail! You'll be begging to show her your dusty old instrument.



## Off the Wall



Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group



### Anti-luddite

"I'll kill myself if technology implodes and I have to pull a plough."

**Stephen Tailby**



### Bricking it

"Lego lost me at Indy, but if people are going to buy such blatantly uninspired drivel, let them. It works out cheaper than a lobotomy."

**Mark McDurr Allen**



### Toilet humour

"I have never read the mag on the bog. I may give it a try and see if it enhances the overall experience!"

**Nick Leighton**



### Sniper alley

"I thought I saw a sniper jogging across our garden. Turns out it was dad carrying vegetation being chased by one of our chickens."

**Holly Cooper**



### PSN 24

"It's not the only thing that'll make you blind if you do it for 24 hours, fnar fnar..."

**Iain Wilson**



### Diesel powered

"I want a game where I get to be Vin Diesel's underpants for a day."

**Joe McLachlan**



### Pony tale

"I'd like to see Pony Friends on PS3 in 1080p. Imagine HD mane and poop."

**Michael Lungley**

Send your questions to:  
[opm@futurenet.com](mailto:opm@futurenet.com)

who is...

# Chun-Li

It means 'spring beauty' [sigh]

Chunners first strode into our lives in 1991, all hair buns and thunder thighs, and we haven't looked at another girl since. (Shhh, Bayonetta.) Here was a new challenger who could float like a cherry blossom and kick like an angry mule. The murder of her father by M Bison, suspiciously-dressed boss of the Shadaloo crime syndicate, provides her motive for fighting in the tournament. More importantly, she proved that nippy, lady characters didn't have to be joke characters. Oh to be on the receiving end of one of her combos. Head stomp, flip kick, and then, *the throw*.

## Screen queen

### The Animated Movie

Chun-Li's first anime outing was admirably accurate. Determined, cute, and hard as nails, her fight against Vega was the coolest of the entire movie. And then there was *that* shower scene...



### Street Fighter: The Ultimate Battle

Played by ER's Ming-Na Wen, Chun-Li was demoted from Interpol agent to lowly reporter. Then Van Damme beat her to Bison! A travesty, but at least she didn't look as daft as Blanka.



### Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li

After the debacle of the first live action film, Chunners gets star billing. Yes! And indeed no. It's a shocker, and lovely though Kristin Kreuk is, does anyone think she looks right?



### Street Fighter V

Reduced to a mere tour guide to a teenage Ryu and Ken, and lacking her trademark outfit as well, the younger, less aggressive Chun-Li still kicked 17 separate shades of ass through the Street Fighter prequel series.



#29  
PLAYSTATION  
LEGENDS  
PlayStation  
Official Magazine - UK

## Friends and foes

### M Bison

Having murdered Chun-Li's father, M Bison is responsible for her entire involvement in the World Warrior tournament. Closing down his criminal organisation Shadaloo is her official mission. Destroying him forever is the 'unofficial' one.



### Gen

This deadly, terminally ill old curmudgeon was a good friend and teacher of Chun-Li's father during her childhood, and even taught her a few of his fancy kung fu moves. It is Gen who first reveals Bison's involvement in her father's death.



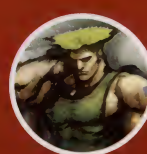
### Crimson Viper

Double-agent Viper masquerades as an employee of baddy Seth's nefarious SIN weapons company in SFIV, secretly plotting to take it down. Cue much head-bumping with an investigating Chun-Li, despite them both actually being on the same side.



### Guile

The air force Lieutenant with the gravity defying hair helps Chun-Li destroy M Bison's Shadaloo base, along with the help of his best friend Charlie. They succeed in blowing up the base, however, not only does Bison escape, but Charlie is killed by the explosion.



## Main moves



### Lightning kick

A toe-based machine gun of pain. Noobs will spam it all day long, but in a well-played combo or corner trap it's absolutely lethal. Those white kinky boots show it off beautifully, too.



### Spinning bird kick

Coollest-looking of all the Street Fighter II moves, Chun-Li's inverted leg-copter is impressively gymnastic. See if you can resist pausing the game to catch a sly pant-shot. Oh come on, we've all done it.



### Kikoken

Chun-Li's 'welcome back' present for the Street Fighter II Turbo Edition was the Kikoken fireball upgrade. It's absolutely no match for one of Ryu's Hadokens, but is still a pretty handy distraction.



### Wall jump

The move that really set Chun-Li apart was this naughty little wall-jump trick. No flames, no teleporting, no flashing her knick-knacks... just a killer surprise. "Hey, where'd she go?"

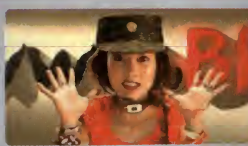
## Chun-Li trivia



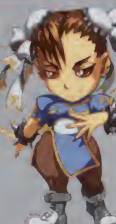
The Arctic Monkeys named a track after Ms Li. Chun-Li's Spinning Bird Kick (the tune, not the move) was even nominated for a Grammy.



Chun-Li was played by none other than Jackie Chan during a hallucinatory, Street Fighter II-themed fight scene in his martial arts movie City Hunter. Seriously. You have to see it. The best we can say is he's got the legs right.



Chun-Li voice actress Yuko Miyamura can be seen in plenty of Japanese movies and anime, most notably as a training instructor in Battle Royale.

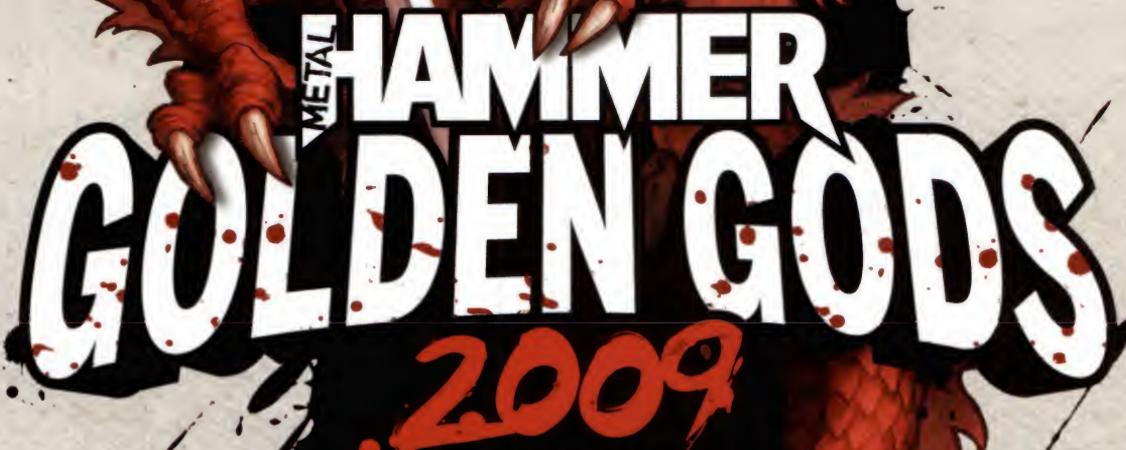


Chun-Li was the fighting game world's first lady combatant, but she's also the only female Street Fighter to appear in every sub-series since SFII, having graced II, III, IV, Alpha and even Puzzle Fighter.



Chun-Li has done lots of Capcom cameos. She snuck into Final Fight 2, among other games, and most recently popped up in Mega Man 9.

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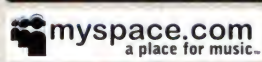
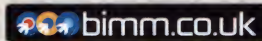
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